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TO
THE MEMORY OF
My Mother.

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PREFACE

IN compiling this book for publication, its purpose should be clearly understood. It is not so much a book for experts and connoisseurs — too much has been written in that strain — but for those persons who would like to become more intimately acquainted with Japanese Art, but have been deterred from doing so by the want of a book which would accomplish this, without obliging them to turn specialists.

This is the first history of Japanese Art which attempts to popularize the subject. I have endeavoured sincerely and sympathetically to reproduce all its leading phases and characteristics, and to show its gradual growth from the archaic period to our modern time, bearing in its evolutions such a striking resemblance to the art of Europe. As in the latter, so in the former, primitive art was a religious art, and in both the feudal period was followed by a renaissance. In the seventeenth century, the glorious epoch of the Fukugawa Shogunate corresponds to the age of Louis XV., while in the eighteenth century the classical ideal was followed by a realistic tendency in both Japan and Europe.

The great difficulty lay in knowing what to omit. Japan was very fertile in the production of artists — the famous Hayashi's collection mentions over four hundred representatives of the Ukio-ye school alone, and the necessary limitations of space, among other reasons, made it impossible to exhaust the list of all those worthy of mention. I have paid slight attention to the peculiar habit of Japanese artists of changing their names several times during their professional career,—as it would test the memory too severely,—but invariably, except in a few cases, mentioned the name by which they were best known, Nor have I devoted much space to biographical notes and the Japanese titles of the artists' works, as they would only confuse the reader.

My sole aim was to show what the leading schools and their foremost exponents have actually accomplished, with particular stress on those of their accomplishments which appeal most strongly to our Western sense of æsthetics, and to also give the layman an opportunity of coming into touch with the infinite variety and grace of Japanese pictorialism.

I hope that this book will be welcomed by all those interested in the culture of a country where, apparently, for centuries, all worked in harmony, pursuing the same ideals and following the same methods of ornamentation, in order to produce a national art: the art of Old Japan.

THE AUTHOR.

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JAPANESE ART

CHAPTER I.

EARLY RELIGIOUS PAINTING

The Kanaoka School (7th–10th Century)

GODS and goddesses, with large halos against dark blue backgrounds, strange divinities, smiling serenely, garbed in soft, flowing draperies, seated on thrones cushioned with lotus flowers, and surrounded by mythological attributes — such are the pictures that have come down to us from the earliest period of Japanese art.

Just as in Italy religious painting, before giving place to the more realistic art of the successors of Masaccio, had incarnated in the work of Fra Angelico its ideal and mystical tendencies, so Japan embodied in the decorative panels of its temples its ancient ideals of pure and native beauty.

In the eighth century, when the city of Nara was made the seat of the Mikado's government, Japan was by no means in an archaic state. The authority of the crown had become greatly extended, the power of the hereditary local chieftains broken, and a system of government instituted with prefects, who held office subject to the control of the Mikado. Learning, which in Japan meant the study of the masterpieces of Chinese antiquity, had made progress. Schools had been established, and a university, comprising the four faculties of history, of the Chinese classics, of law, and of arithmetic, was founded. This, it will be observed, was for the benefit of the official classes only. It was not until many centuries later that education reached the common people. There were also teachers, mostly Koreans, of medicine, painting, and the glyptic art. The colossal bronze statue of Buddha, and some remarkable sculptures in wood, which are still to be seen at Nara, testify to the skill which the Japanese had then acquired in the last named art.

The first written book which has come down to us in the Japanese, or indeed in any Turanian tongue, the Kojiki or "Records of Ancient Matters," was completed in 712; and at the court of Nara there existed a regular hereditary corporation of "reciters," similar to the bards of Britannia and Ireland, who recited "ancient words" before the Mikado on solemn occasions.

Of even greater importance were their

achievements in architecture. This art was intimately connected with Buddhism, a cult which demanded stately temples and pagodas for its due exercise. The increasing authority of the court also required edifices more befitting its dignity, and more in consonance with the gorgeous costumes and ceremonials adopted from China, than the old sovereign palaces, which were only temporary, every Mikado having built himself a palace in a new locality.

China was in those days not as unprogressive, prosaic, sordid in temperament, and mercenary in aim as it is to-day (or as we suppose it to be). Its ancient civilization, its copious and, in many respects, remarkable literature, and a history which even then went back thousands of years, exercised a commanding influence on the surrounding countries. It played the part of Greece to the Eastern world, and there is no department of Japanese national life and thought, whether material civilization, religion, morals, political organization, language, literature or art, which does not bear traces of Chinese influence.

Beyond China lies India, which has furnished an important factor in moulding the Japanese character, namely, Buddhism. If, in regard to Japan, China takes the place of Greece and Rome, Buddhism, with its softening and humanizing influences, holds a position similar to that of Christianity in the Western world. The alternate preponderance of these two powers is an interesting feature of Japanese history, and we shall see that it has not been without effect upon its art.

The island mountaineers, in continual touch with the mainland, through numerous immigrations from Korea to Japan, which extended over centuries, received the gifts of Chinese and East Indian art and culture with open arms and utilized them to the best advantage. It gave life to their religious and philosophical ideals, to their myths, their poetry, and their art.

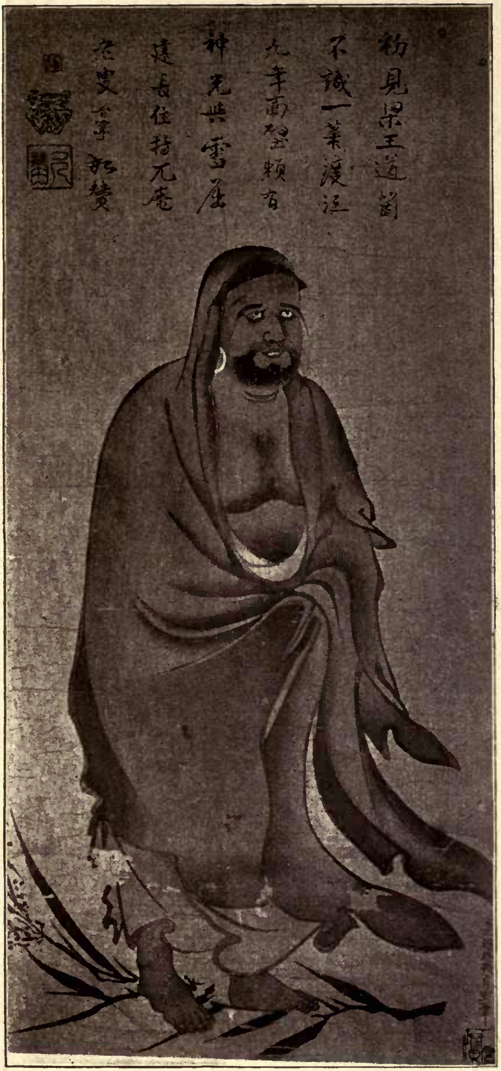
From this, however, it must not be inferred that the Japanese have been only borrowers and copyists. If this were true, if there had been no first individuality, waiting to apprehend and restate the foreign influences, no mere change of atmosphere would have galvanized into life a new culture and a new art. The Japanese would have passed from idol to idol, with the unintelligent submission of savages, and with a benumbing indifference to principles. But Japan, in fact, has ever and anon renewed her youth; and with each outburst of creative efforts the influence of Chinese traditions has become fainter and fainter, and the qualities of the national character more and more pronounced.

The isolated situation and the elongated shape of the Japanese islands, something like that of a narrow crescent severed from the mainland, have helped the land of the rising sun to give birth to a privileged race, fit for all refinements, and gifted with the noblest and most artistic sensibility.

The oldest written documents of the Japanese, those of the eighth and ninth centuries, make no allusion to any style of pictorial art previous to the fifth century. Modern investigation, however, has pronounced a Buddhistic altar-piece in the temple of Horiuji, at Nara, the most ancient pictorial relic. The first painter mentioned was a Chinese, by the name of Shinki, who is said to have come to Japan during the reign of the Emperor Yuriaku (457–479). A little later Suki, a descendant of the Chinese emperor, Wen Ti, came to Nippon and was naturalized. "The brush of his son became famous in the days of Emperor Buretsu" (499–506, A. D.). About three hundred years later, a descendant of Shinki, Nauriu, as he is sometimes called, obtained the title of "Painter of Japan" from the Mikado.

The city of Kyoto became the centre of art. It gathered under its palace roofs and temple eaves all the art those days produced. It became the home of Buddhistic culture, and gave birth to the religious school of painting. Kukai, better known as Daishi, the "illustrious apostle of Buddhism," painted four of the seven images of high priests that have become historical. The painters Kabenari (853) and Minamoto-no-Nabu were employed in the temples, and Kavenaka executed a number of panels for the imperial palace.

The Buddhist monks chiselled from three to five thousand images every year.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Chang-Yüeh-hu.—Kakemonos or Wall Picture of Bodhi-Dharma Crossing the Sea on a Reed.

Chirography was raised to the dignity of a fine art. Mathematics had many expert exponents. The study of astronomy was taken up with new zeal, and the art of healing made considerable progress. The Minamotos made their age wonder at their musical gifts, and the writing of poetry became a favourite pastime with the ladies of the court.

In the ninth century the temples and palaces were filled with renowned pictures, both by natives and Chinese. Kanaoka, who typifies the earliest style of Japanese painting, spent long years in studying them. He became famous about 850–859. In 880 he decorated the screens and walls of the Kyoto palace with the portraits of Confucius and other Chinese philosophers. A few years later he painted a serial of the ancient sages and poets of Japan for the audience-chamber of the Mikado's palace.

His sacred pictures, Japanese divinities in the beatified attitudes of India, tiptoeing on waves, wrapped in clouds, or sitting cross-legged, weighed down by heavenly meditations, are said to have been very numerous.

Very little of it, however, has been saved, nor have his successors been more successful in that respect. The secular enemy of Japanese temples, fire, has destroyed nearly all, and those few that have been preserved are altered in colour by exposure and oxidation. Only the deep clear blue, so often seen in the old Buddhist pictures, consisting of pure *lapis lazuli*, ground up into a pigment, is to-day as brilliant as it was of yore.

This *lapis lazuli* blue is really the most characteristic colour of Japan. The first vivid colour-impression a stranger receives as he walks through the streets of Yeddo or Yokohama is this peculiar blue. The top-heavy roofs of the buildings are mostly covered with blue tiles, and the same colour-note dominates in the popular costume and the sign-boards of the shops. There is, in places, a sprinkling of light blue, white, and red; but the remainder is blue — green and yellow being almost completely absent.

Of Kanaoka's painting, scarcely a dozen specimens remain. One can still be seen at the temple of Nieinai; another, representing the god Fudo, enveloped by flames, with a big wand in his hand, at the temple Dayuyi at Tokyo. Also the ancient temples at Nara and in the province of Bizen contain examples of his work. There is consequently no reason to doubt his great talent.

Various legends tell of wonderful feats accomplished by his brush. One of the best known of these stories, reminding one of Zeuxis's grapes, which were so naturally painted that the birds came to pick at them, is as follows:

"The rice-fields were nightly devastated by some unknown horse, which by day could on no occasion be tracked. One night, however, it was resolved among the peasants to lie in wait for the animal. As soon as darkness came, it did not fail to make its appearance, but it was swift and artful, showing no willingness to allow its capture. Then a desperate pursuit commenced, which seemed to be without end. — The chase grows wilder and more furious. Suddenly, however, the animal disappears through a temple door, his hunters follow him; they search everywhere around and cannot find him, until in the wall, in a celebrated picture, which hangs in its accustomed place, they see the fiery beast, who has just reëntered his frame, entirely covered with foam, and still panting from his frantic race.

"The horse had been so wondrously portrayed by Kanaoka, and, indeed, with such an appearance of real life, that he became a living thing, and returned each night to liberty amongst the fields."

The only Kanaoka that can be seen outside of Japan is at the Louvre in Paris. It bears the date of the second half of the ninth century, and was brought over in 1882 by a Japanese amateur. The museum authorities at first refused to consider it, but finally consented to admit it. It represents Dsijo, the god of benevolence. With his plump body half naked, his head shaven, his eyes half closed, he is gazing into space. It appears that he has been dreaming thus for a very long time, and that he will never rouse himself again to the sensations of reality. This being is isolated from the rest of the world; he has entered Nirvana.

It is a work of art manifestly primitive, and yet not crude, as were, for instance, the ancient mural paintings of Egypt, which represented personages in profile while the eyes were seen as if from a front view. The drawing, although not anatomically correct, is marvellously sure and pure in its line composition. Infinitely removed from mere prettiness, from empty abstraction as from realistic curiosity, there is in its line idea an exhaustless wealth of languid grace and eastern deliciousness. One could not change a single line by a hair's breadth without changing the poise of the whole. The colouring is harmonious, reminding one slightly of faded tapestry and the deep, satiated tones of the Primitives; but that is more the work of time than of the painter's brush.

It would be extremely difficult to trace the origin of this peculiar art. It is not, as yet, genuinely Japanese; its composition is too symmetrical for that, and the flow of the lines not rapid and instantaneous enough. The Chinese painters of the Tang dynasty painted in a more rigid and pompous manner. The conception of the picture is purely Buddhistic. In Benares you may run across similar pictures, but their treatment is generally more elaborate. The Hindu perceives chiefly the multitudinous and diverse, and everything in his art is complex and exaggerated, and, for the lack of leading lines, irregular. The picture of Kanaoka, on the contrary, is as simple as early Byzantine work, and as soft and graceful as Persian painting. It is therefore possible that the beginnings of Japanese art were strongly affected by Persian influences. That there was an exchange of ideas between Persia and Japan in those remote days, is known from ancient chronicles, which report that " Persian and Japanese embassies met at the court of the Middle Kingdom."

Although rarely rising to greatness and freedom of expression, the work of this period has a never-failing tenderness and purity, a cheerfulness and sincerity, a refinement of feeling, which gives an elevated pleasure to the student who approaches these relics in a less critical than appreciative mood. They possess a living, self-withdrawn quality of expression which gives them a peculiar religious grace — not ecclesiastical unction, but the devoutness of the heart.

The painters devoted themselves chiefly to religious subjects, but among their works were also occasional portraits, figures of animals, and landscapes. Most of this work was executed on the walls, ceilings, and sliding screens (*shoyi*) of the Buddhistic temples. But also the more up-to-date vehicles for pictorial expression, to which we have become accustomed, were already in use, namely, *kakemonos* (wall pictures), *makimonos* (scroll pictures) and *gakus*.

The *kakemono* is an oblong piece of silk, framed in stripes of brocade, and mounted on a long narrow strip of canvas with wooden rollers. The *makimono* is a scroll with rollers, intended to be examined by hand, and the *gaku* a picture framed in Western fashion.

Kanaoka originated a different style of technique for each of these mediums, fully realizing that each would need an individual treatment of its own. He founded the imperial school of Yedoreko, and had many pupils; the most illustrious ones being, as is so often the case with Japanese artists, members of his own family, his two sons, Atima and Kateda, and his great-grandson, Hirotaka (987–1012). The latter was a priest as well as a painter, and is said to have been the first painter who depicted the Buddhistic hell. One of his compositions, on a large scale, remarkable in its power of characterization, is still shown to visitors of the temple of Tchiorakouyi, in the province of Omi.

From all over the country, particularly from the province of Hida, artisans, who were at once architects, carvers, and carpenters, came flocking to Kyoto, among them Suminawa, who surpassed his brother artists in skill to such an extent that the people of Kyoto called him " the carpenter artist of Hida." Temple after temple was built, and not less than thirteen thousand images were painted, by imperial decree, during the reign of Mikado Genwa (859–876).

Kyoto must have been an extraordinary city in those days. Elsewhere, religion and art were only parts of the public life, at Kyoto scarcely anything else was to be seen. It occupied thousands of enthusiasts, whole streets were turned into studios and workshops, and the population of idols and images is said to have been as numerous as the human population.

The Shiba temple at Tokyo still gives a faint idea of this era of religious splendour. With erudition, a Western mind may be able to reproduce for itself the ideas and sentiments, the sequences of images and emotions which formed the soul of a Buddhistic painter or architect. We can imagine the intense impression it must have created in those days, when religion occupied every moment of man's thought, as even to-day we feel bewildered at its traces.

At first sight, one scarcely knows what all these forms represent. They only seem a confusion of lines, curving, interlaced, entangled by chance. By degrees shapes are discernible — gods, genii, dragons, dolphins, animals and flowers, waves and flames, all elements thrown together, piled one over the other like a living heap. Everything seems endlessly complicated, some divinities have half a dozen heads or more, the plants extend in every direction, the flowers are entwined and twisted into each other. Everything is multiple in this inundation of divinities, in this confusion of chapels, altars, sacred lanterns, statues of animals and huge lotus flowers. This characteristic appears again in the strange architectural constructions, where one curve grows out of another, as a leaf out of a leaf; and where gods innumerable, bodies of quadrupeds and of submarine creatures, half tortoise and half monkey, abound, crushing each other, rising in quaint geometrical shapes of diverse forms.

The creation of symbols is an entire world by itself. The Japanese mind, which is otherwise so correct and well ordered, has run wild. All our mental habits are set at naught by this multitudinousness of apparitions. A sensation of bewilderment and vertigo overcomes us as we look at those endless processions of gods, divinities, mythological personages, genii and demons, at these hairy, extravagantly shaped creatures with elongated arms and legs, with enormous craniums (like Fukuruja, the god of wealth), at these eight-headed dragons twisting and writhing in vapours or flames, at these strange bodies of quadrupeds, unknown to the zoology of a Cuvier or Agassiz. Fairy castles, inhabited by wicked demons, rise fata-morgana-like in the mist, jewel-ornamented sea-shrines sparkle in the depth of the waves, and dragon-guarded caves open before one's astonished eyes.

The Japanese of nimble apprehension, with a turn for neatness and elegance even in his pleasures, is fond of listening to stories, and it matters little to him whether they are told to the eye or ear. Whether tattooed on the back of a foot-runner, pounded out by punch or hammer in metal, enamelled in cloisonné or niello, embroidered, inlaid, or painted, his eye delights to read the familiar, fancy-tickling lore.

The artists have taken advantage of this predilection for symbols. They have elaborated them into a sort of artistic shorthand, and classified them into groups, by means of which they are able to tell many a long story with utmost brevity. And they never tire of telling the story in the same way. Benten, a female personification of virtue, is represented as a beautiful woman playing a lute. Kwannon, the goddess of the sea, sits among jagged rocks at the shore, outwardly the type of peace and contemplation, inwardly ranging with restless eye the treacherous expanses of ocean, from whose disaster and death, by her supreme will, she rescues the helpless marines. Futen, the wind-imp, lives aloft, as he loosens and opens his ever-plethoric wind-bag, setting into motion zephyrs, breezes, cyclones, or tornadoes. Raiden, the thunder-god, busy with his drums, is always partially hidden among clouds. A number of genii with quaint, uncouth names, invariably performing the same antics, can be recognized at the first glance. One of them conjures miniature horses out of a gourd; another floats on a hollow trunk; a third one never tires of looking at a waterfall; a little old man is persistently depicted riding an ox; a beggar amuses himself by emitting his spirit out of his mouth; another one tramps about, accompanied by a toad which generally sits on his head; and the best known of all these curious personages invariably rises from a river on the back of a winged carp.

This fairy world furnished the artist with a most fascinating repertoire, to which, with slight deviation, he has remained faithful to this very day.

Space does not permit to tell of all the creatures in Japanese mythology. In many instances, they are the epitomes, expressed in graphic symbols, of past myths, or of real struggles and conquests, the memory of which survives in imagination but not in chronology.

Japan is largely indebted to Buddhism for its art symbols. The symbolism of Gautama is like an immense vegetation, with ever-increasing branches, an inextricable network of offshoots, all growing vigorously and unrestrained, covering all of men's thoughts with its ornamental fretwork.

Buddhism, however, became in Japan

never as intense as in India. Its rites did not become tyrannical, and its metaphysics did not worry and confuse the people. The Japanese, being rather sentimental than passionate, and more ingenious and inventive than profound, found himself incapable of leading the languid life of the Hindu. He was too active and receptive for that. His voracious appetite for knowledge did not allow him to deny his *ego*. The incense, which in India was stupefying, giving to scenes a certain unreality and the character as of a dream, was in Japan merely a veil, that embellished and spiritualized actuality.

The Nipponese imbued the violent emotions and overwhelming meditations of Buddhism with the gentler spirit of the myth and folk-lore of their original faith, of Shintoism, which is the simplest creed imaginable, teaching little more than reverence for the supernatural powers that created and govern the universe of man.

It is impossible to understand the evolution of the Japanese race and the individuality of their art without Shintoism, for Shintoism lives not so much in books, rites, or commandments, but in the heart of the nation, of which it is the highest emotional expression. For, underlying all the surface crop of foreign superstitions, myths, and magic, there thrilled always this mighty spiritual power, which endowed everything with its elusive subtlety and buoyant geniality, and which taught the Japanese to feel the throb of their own national life whenever foreign impact threatened to sweep away native idols and precedents.

CHAPTER II.

THE FEUDAL PERIOD

The Yamoto and Tosa Schools (1000–1400)

NEXT to Buddhism, feudalism was the special patron and stimulus of the Japanese artist.

A glance at the arms and armour of a feudal lord shows how his full equipment summoned most of the fine arts to the service of the warrior caste. The harness of hide and chain armour, silk and steel, brocade and lacquer; the helmet and breastplate of chased gold and silver; the dragon insignia of cast and chiselled metal; the silken banner, woven, embroidered, or painted, with the ancestral blazon; the polished triumphs of the quiver and arrow-maker's art; the double bow of wood and cane; the sword-rack from the gold-lacquerer's hand; the swords, "the samurai's soul," with their hilts and handles encrusted with ornaments of precious metals; the bear-skin shoes and tiger-skin sheath; the shark-hide grip, and curiously wrought dirk scabbard, made a panoply to which the masters of many arts contributed.

In 1050 a noble of the court, Motomitsu, founded a new national school of painting, the Yamoto, which two centuries later, when it became the official art school, adopted the name of Tosa. It pretended to separate Japanese art from all foreign influences. Times had changed; the different branches of fine and liberal arts had made rapid strides toward perfection, and bore the impress which native influences had stamped upon them. In dancing and music, in architecture, in the cut and pattern of garments, in literature, the Japanese had created a world which was distinct from anything foreign, and which was all their own.

Although Chinese inspiration gave birth to the Yamoto school, the latter developed into something entirely different from anything Chinese. In other words, it created a school of Nipponese pictorial art, in which it would be hard to find a touch of Chinese influence, as far as the choice of subject is concerned, for its principal merit lay in the faithful reproduction of Japanese feudal life.

It was a troublous period, marked by furious combats and other warlike events, of acts of vengeance, secretly planned and fulfilled by treachery. The spirit of chivalry developed itself to an extreme point, and during all this period of blood and fire, of frenzy and dark passions, the code of honour and the scorn of death arrived at that pitch, which has called forth the admiration of the universe, and which was maintained until the very last years of Old Japan.

The Yamoto-Tosa school has represented these multitudinous phases of feverish agitation, the bitter contests by sea and land, the proud mien of warriors, the tournaments, single combats, warlike adventures of generals, heroic actions and hairbreadth escapes of the warrior caste, with a host of minute details of dress, ceremonials, and pompous processions; but it has also shown the *daimyo* (feudal lord) returning to his home in times of peace, applying himself in his castle gardens to all the tender and poetic inclinations, that a long period of ungoverned passion had been unable to banish from his soul.

This style has been called ornate. The writers who apply this epithet generally refer to the peculiar monotony in the representation of the human figures. No matter how vigorously they are drawn, they look like dolls and automatons, not like real living beings. They are mere flourishes, often of not more importance than the courtly honorifics which are scrawled all over the picture. There is much excuse for this. The Yamoto school was merely a means to glorify the nobility. Most of the personages depicted were personages of rank, living daimyos, or their ancestors, in delineating whose actions a more realistic style would have been offensive. The student finds it irritating and tiresome at first, but soon gets accustomed to it. In truth, such depiction was in entire consonance with the elaborate ceremonial, the imposing but cumbrous costume, and much else of the rather artificial life of the Japanese court of that time.

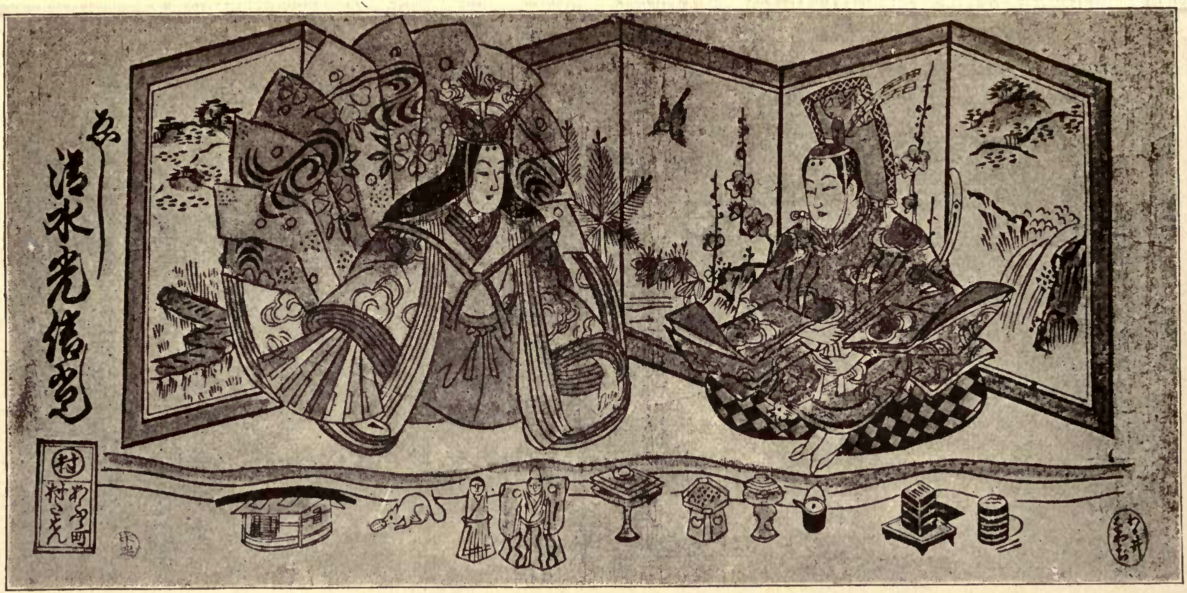
The painters' contemporaries, no doubt, found these pictures quite easy to understand; but since then the institutions, manners, and customs have changed so much as greatly to obscure their meaning, not only to Western students, but to the Japanese themselves. Piles of commentary by native connoisseurs have been accumulated over it, and their interpretations are often so inadequate, that writers of a later date have found it, in turn, necessary to write critical works, almost entirely taken up with correcting the errors of their predecessors.

It is almost impossible for foreigners to form an accurate opinion of this school. It is very imperfectly represented in European and American collections. True enough, pictures of the Tosa school are quite often offered for sale, but they are invariably products of a later date. Specimens of the eleventh, twelfth, and thirteenth century can no longer be purchased, even if one were willing to pay their weight hundredfold in gold. They are in the possession of old Japanese families, and most jealously guarded. Even of the more modern exponents of the Tosa school, as Mitsunobu (died, 1525), Mitsuoky, and finally Mitsuyoshi, authentic pictures can seldom be seen.

In the eleventh century the artist families of Minamoto and Motomitsu were most prominent; in the twelfth century we encounter the names of Toba Soja, the horse painter and originator of Japanese caricature, which had such a great revival in the seventeenth century, and the two great colourists, Tamehissa and Nobuzane. In the thirteenth century Tsoutenaka became the leader of the imperial school of Tosa. His contemporaries were Takatshika, who decorated the temple of Kassouga, which was finished by his descendants in the fourteenth century, the two Buddhistic priests, Ono Sojo and Seyin, and Soumiyoshi, "painter of the imperial court."

Subjecting the work of the Yamato and Tosa schools to a close analysis, one realizes at once that the Japanese principles of composition are notably different from ours.

First of all, the Japanese never uses frames. Frames serve to us as boundary lines for a pictorial representation similar to those to which we are subjected in looking at a fragment of life out of an ordinary window. The frame clearly defines the painter's pictorial vision, and concentrates the interest upon his canvas even to such an extent that all other environments are forgotten. The Japanese artist never uses solid, elevated "boundary lines" to isolate his picture, but, on the contrary, tries to make his picture merely a note of superior



MITSUNOBU.—PRINCE AND PRINCESS.

interest in perfect harmony with the rest of the kakemono, which, again, is in perfect harmony with the wall in which it is placed. He simply uses strips of beautifully patterned cloth to set off the picture, and endeavours to accentuate its lines and colour notes by the mounting and the momentary environments, for the Japanese does not understand our way of hanging pictures in inadequate surroundings. He subordinates everything to his inherent ideas of harmony, and is perfectly aware that all the accessories of a room, as the colour of screens, the form of vases and lacquer-cabinets, etc., must harmonize with the picture, in order to reveal its true significance.

This has been called "decorative." "Japanese art is decorative," our critics have repeated over and over again. What a meaningless phrase! Art, whether Japanese, European, or American, is decorative only when it has been designed to decorate something useful. But these Mitsunobus decorate nothing. The kakemonos are self-contained expressions, and only because an ordinary interior would jar with their subtle charms, the Japanese find it necessary to supply special surroundings for them. They called forth a superior style of interior decoration, but are not decorative themselves, unless the word decorative is used in a sense synonymous with beautiful.

Of course, any one familiar with Japanese art knows that it neglects, or is indifferent to, the mystery of chiaroscura, the persuasiveness of linear perspective, and the logic of local colour. And yet they convey depth of space, an effective scale of relative importances in colour, and the purity of atmosphere, as well as we do.

Their neglect of linear perspective is a most peculiar trait, for one cannot conceive such close observers as the Chinese and Japanese being unable to see, for instance, that a road appears to diminish as it recedes from the eye. Why is this? That intricate laws of perspective want study, that even the vanishing lines of two sides of a house may not be perceptible to the ignorant, may be possible, but the merest child sees that a road is narrower at the end than at the beginning where he stands. Then, again, although the anatomy of each bird, beast, and fish is as closely observed as to its general characteristics, distance is indicated only by diminishing the objects depicted; and the armour, and each detail of the costumes of the soldiers a mile off, are painted with as much minuteness as that on the men who are in the immediate foreground.

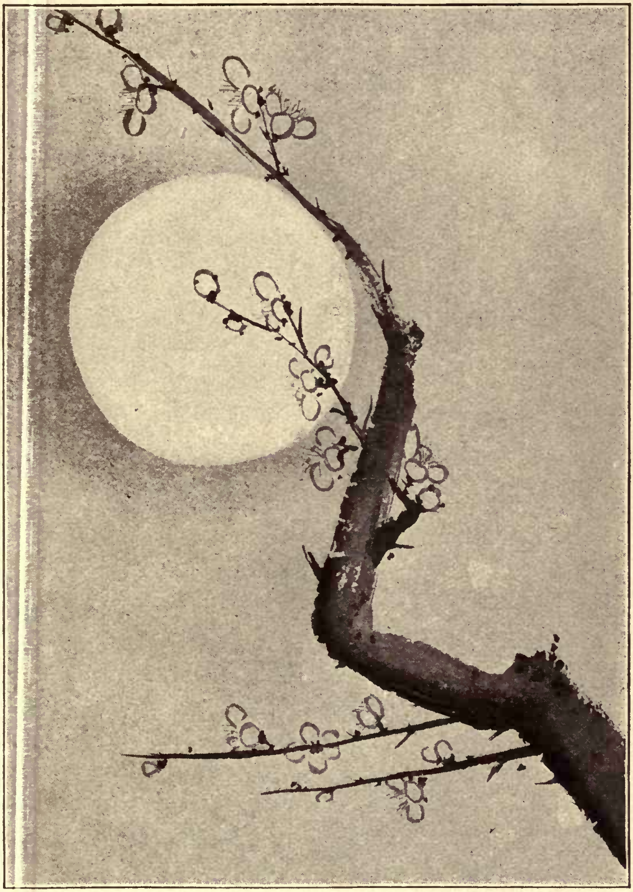
Another striking peculiarity is the lack of form knowledge. The Japanese painters, not only those of the Yamoto-Tosa school, but to this very day, have never drawn a proper human face or body, as we understand it. Take, for instance, a warrior or court lady, by Mitsunobu. The representation undoubtedly has its merits. It is, despite the frugality of its colouring, an example of most perfect flesh painting, "after its kind," which for modelling reminds one of Holbein. There is all the apparent flatness, the want of strange effects of light and shade, and the intense individuality of expression, and yet the drawing, precise as it is, is neither anatomically nor proportionately correct. This seems the more astonishing to us as the Japanese men and women are by no means shy in appearing naked, which, after all, offers the best opportunity for studying the human form. It must be noted, however, that their religious belief regards the body as a vile carcass, of no worth whatever, destined to rot and waste away. This, in connection with canons as rigid and indisputable as those of the ancient Greeks, which exactly told the painter how to paint, may explain much of this mannerism in the eccentric drawing of drapery, or the features of the human face. In treating the folds of a woman's dress, for instance, they had to make them either "undulating as the waves of the sea," or "angular as the edges of rocks," etc.

European art, both painting and sculpture, went through a continued course of development. Naturally, I mean development as regards knowledge of anatomy, of form, of colour, and of general technique. As regards sentiment, perhaps there was more decadence than progress, arriving from a change in feeling and in faith, without a corresponding change in subject. The Greeks, as the Italians, passed through the same phase of art, continuing to produce subjects long after all faith in them had passed away. Hence, the decadence in Greek art in the early centuries of our era, and in Italian art in the seventeenth century. But as soon as men perceived their error, and determined to paint what was around and about them, art revived and their technique improved. The Flemish schools, the Spanish, and later on the French and English, even our American school, all show progress in that respect. In Japan there had been nothing analagous to this. The subjects have been changed, but the technique has always remained true to certain rules and regulations; and it would be difficult to state whether the Tosa, Kano, or Ukio-ye masters were the greater draughtsmen or colourists.

With this, I do not wish to imply that the Japanese artist does not study from nature. On the contrary, he has derived all the fundamental ideas of his pictorial conceptions, so different from ours, from a close study of nature. The Japanese are on by far more intimate terms with nature than we are, and "nature walks" have always been one of the most popular means of instruction in the education of their children. But the artist never drew directly from nature. He merely looked at objects, absorbed all their peculiarities, and then went back to his studio to combine the facts of nature with certain conventional modes of treatment, in his opinion best suited to the purpose.

In the thirteenth century, flower, animal, and still life painting came into fashion. The Tosa masters never learned to equal the Chinese in the faithful reproduction of the hair of a beast, of the down of feathers, the veining of petals, or the dust on a butterfly's wing, but they gave play to a fancy of their own, and added charms, which the miniaturists of the Celestial Kingdom had never dreamt of.

In the beginning, satisfied with closely and minutely imitating natural objects, and creating a pictorial illusion, as far as that is possible without the application of light and shade, they soon strove for a less conventional treatment, which, several centuries later, developed into the decorative style, absolutely individual with the Japanese, which rather *suggests* than imitates the external facts of nature. At the start, their attempts were very feeble, almost childish. They were seriously handicapped by the literature of regulations, regular codes laid down by *savants*, as to how subjects should be represented, but the idea that the movement of plants, their peculiar way of standing in the air, etc., were more important for the general appearance of objects than a mere study



Late Tosa School. — Orchard in Spring.

of form and texture, gradually induced them to break away from formalism. They tried to imbue a fragment of nature, uninteresting in itself, with a poetical idea. In the representation of a basket of mountain flowers, for instance, they ventured to introduce the poetic suggestion of a mountain in the background. These experiments resulted, many centuries later, in the combination of panoramic views with ostentatious details, as practised by Okyo and other masters, who used the delicate structure of a flower or plant as foreground, and connected the latter with the landscape behind it by a few broad effects or a wilful emptiness.

If a Japanese wishes to give the impression of an orchard in spring, he does not paint the whole scene as a Western painter would do, but simply suggests it by a twig in delicate bloom, with the graceful silhouette of a waning moon behind it.

The Tosa school gave the first impulse toward this conciseness of expression, which is also a characteristic of Japanese poetry, which has reached in the *haikai*, a stanza consisting of seventeen syllables, its extreme limit of brevity.

Although no great qualities can be claimed for these poetical forms, it must be admitted that the Japanese poets have made the most of their slender resources. It is wonderful what melody and true sentiment they have managed to compress within these narrow limits. In the same manner the Japanese painters learnt to produce a truly admirable effect by a few dexterous strokes of the brush. The masters of the Tosa school, however, recognized this only theoretically. They had not yet the calligraphic dexterity to practise it.

The school has become famous for its conscientious details, the elegance and beauty of its lines and touches, for its brilliant and harmonious colouring, which reminds one of Persian *emaille* painting.

The brightest and the strongest hues, red, blue, green, white, and gold, are employed in all their intensity. The greater part of the space to be covered is broken up by variegated daubs and patches, while some broad mass of leading colour is always interposed at definite intervals to impart solidity to the whole.

Their works, virile and melodramatic as they are at times, are full of grace and beauty and seem the natural manifestation of serene, contented, and happy minds. Their gift of colour, fragrant and fragile as plum and cherry trees in bloom, is all their own. And it is this exquisite gift of theirs which constitutes the principal charm of their work. Fine and true though their feeling for beauty and flow of lines will always be found, their composition is somewhat awkward. But in colour they never strike a false note. In their exquisite blending of tints, one can easily read the delight in all loveliness which characterized that particular part of their history, shadowed only now and then by strange misgivings one feels in their work, when they depict the blood-stained life of the daimyos. In these pictures the artists seem conscious of the doom that hung over the feudal time, and this knowledge clouded their delineations, giving them a strange fascination that is irresistible.

Religious painting had not ceased to exist, but Buddhism had greatly changed. It aspired to worldly power, and the three thousand monasteries which at this time dotted the slopes of Hiyeisan, a mountain northeast of Kyoto, were a very material embodiment of Buddhist influence. Not content with mere spiritual weapons, the inmates of these establishments were always ready on the smallest provocation to don armour over their monastic frocks and troop down to the streets of Kyoto, to place their swords on whatever scale of the politics of the day seemed to them most expedient. A priesthood to whom a practical knowledge of war and warlike accomplishments was vital was not conducive to the production of important religious paintings.

The Japanese nobleman, moreover, had more than a mere tolerance for other creeds. Although in the main either a Buddhist or Shintoist, he also took more than an ordinary interest in the Confucian moral philosophy and even in Taoism, that mass of vague speculation, attributed to Laotze and his disciple Chwang Chow.

The primitive style of Kanaoka consequently languished. Temples, of course, were built; all sorts of mythological creatures carved out of huge blocks of wood, and colossal figures of Buddha constructed, but the painters, either retained by the daimyos or roaming about in a vagrom way from castle to castle, began to look at Buddhism in a somewhat cynical way, and depicted the deities in a rather disrespectful manner. They became satirists, like Lucian in his "Dialogues of the Gods."

The castle of the feudal lord became to the artist what the monastery had been before. He became one of the daimyo's retainers, and was clothed, fed, and lodged by him, the only return expected from him being the production of the best work in his power. And, although the daimyos often fought for years at a time in the very streets of Kyoto, setting fire to temples and reducing to ashes many of the art treasures which were once the glory of the ancient capital, the artists could work in perfect security behind the castle walls, and dream their twilight dreams, all fragrant with the flowers of nature and art. The Japanese artist led an ideal existence, simply living for art's sake. Many of their greatest painters may be said to have known nothing of money.

With this golden leisure and freedom from care, their power was increased tenfold; and thus has been developed not merely a patience altogether marvellous in the most minute and complete finishing of every detail, not merely a technical excellence seldom equalled and never surpassed, but a power of delineating life, and a sensitiveness to decorative and emotional suggestion, which placed the Japanese in the front rank of the artists of any age or country.

CHAPTER III.

THE RENAISSANCE

The Kano School (1400–1750)

ON misty mornings in spring, the Dai-mouji Mountain, which stands just back of the "Silver Temple" at the east side of Kyoto, looks exactly like a massive silver hieroglyphic. The mountain bears upon its slope a peculiar artificial landmark, resembling the Chinese character signifying "dai," or great, formed by a series of excavations, in which the snow still lingers, while the surface of the mountain is bare.

This colossal character of white snow might readily be taken as a symbol of Japanese art, for the manipulation of the painter's brush is strictly calligraphic. Japanese writing in itself is a sort of painting. Some of the characters of the written language resemble the trees and bridge posts as drawn by certain artists. And do not the gateways of the Japanese temples — these quaint constructions, consisting of two pillars that support horizontally a lintel with projecting ends and a tie beam — remind one involuntarily of some colossal Chinese letter, which has been painted against the sky with four sweeps of vermilion by a giant brush?

The child, learning to write, draws these pictorial signs with a brush, holding the paper, which is absorbent, in his hand. Thus, the whole arm works, motion being got from the shoulder, the elbow, and the wrist alike. One can readily imagine what influence this method of writing has in fostering the power of a child to seize the outlines of natural form.

It learns unconsciously to draw with a free hand. Our children learn to write with a hard pen or pencil; and with the same hard point they make their first attempts at drawing. The young art student suddenly finds a yielding brush placed in his hand. No wonder that he is awkward, and in its manipulation absolutely incapable of competing with a Japanese, who already as a child has learnt the value of touches.

The calligraphic dexterity, as displayed, for instance, in the cranes of Saitoshy, is an inheritance with the Japanese artist. His fingers work almost mechanically, as he delineates a flying bird, the vegetation of mountains, the colours of the sea, the shape of branches, or the spring-burst of flowers. Generations of skilled workmen have given him their cunning, and revive in the marvels of his brush work. What was conscious effort in the beginning became unconscious, instinctive, almost automatic, in later centuries.

At the close of the fourteenth century, the Chinese were still the foremost painters of the Eastern world. China reached its prime during the Sung dynasty (961–1280). It had been an era as conspicuous for the development of great individualities, innovating statesmen, constructive philosophers, inspired poets, and original artists, as that of any period of European civilization.

No wonder that a great wave of Chinese influence passed over the Japanese islands, deeply affecting it in every conceivable way. Not only laws and sciences, but the material civilization, and, most of all, the thoughts of the nation, as expressed in its philosophy and literature, profited by Chinese teaching and example.

Inspired by the great artists of Hangchow, a new school, with the aim of technically equalling the Chinese masters, was founded, destined very soon to surpass the former native schools in merit and renown. In Kanaoka's time, the painters had devoted themselves principally to the representation of gods and heroes; during the feudal period warfare and still life had become the leading subjects; now animals and landscapes came more in evidence.

The figure painter, Cho Densu (1351–1427), also known by the name Meitshyo, and his two pupils, Josetsou and Shubun, who in turn had two pupils, Sotan and Kano Massanobu, were the principal instigators of the movement. As each of these men taught, there existed for a few years, as rivals of the Tosa school, almost as many distinct schools. But, if the chiefs differed from one another in the nature of their genius, they had adopted the same manner, the same subjects, the same general principles; so that they soon became blended into one school — the school of Kano. The leading characteristic of this school was the absolute subordination of colour to design.

In the beginning, the school was devoted entirely to black and white, with an occasional use of bistre or some other faint colour as uniting half-tone. In its later development, it made use of colour, and tried to rival the Tosa painters in a lavish application of gold and brilliant tints. It can even be said that in Yeitaku and Korin the Kano school produced colourists almost as great as Nobuzane in the thirteenth century.

Cho Densu, a Kyoto priest, was the great revivalist of the Kanaoka school. He devoted himself entirely to sacerdotal art. He was one of the few Japanese painters who attempted pictures of a heroic size. His "Death of Sakia," still existing at one of the Kyoto temples, and copied innumerable times by artists to this very day, measures about nine by thirteen feet. It is considered by native critics as one of the masterpieces of ancient art, and favourably impresses one by the breadth of its composition, the firmness of its brush work, the harmony of its colour, and the grandeur of its sentiments. Cho Densu's work, although inferior to Kanaoka in line conception, is as profound and highly intellectual in achievement as anything ever produced by a Japanese brush. It almost rises to sublimity.

Very little is known of Josetsou, except that he was a Chinese by birth, and a priest for many years previous to his taking up landscape painting as a profession.

Of his fellow student, Shubun, on the other hand, many examples have remained, which prove him to be a great technician. He abolished the use of the fine, round, and pointed brushes of the Tosa school, and constructed brushes with broader and flatter surfaces. He had a powerful, vital touch, full of personality. His line, a direct outcome of the study of Wutaotz, celebrated as the greatest painter of China, varied with each object drawn, without losing the strength and boldness of his own individuality. He tried to suggest with every stroke of his brush the leading line-characteristics of houses, rocks, trees, marsh grass, etc.

His pupils, Sotan and Kano Massanobu, perfected his methods, and Saomi wrote a hand-book on painting which has become classical.

Another great man of this movement, according to native authority, was Sesshin (1421–1507). A biographer informs us that:

"He did not follow in the footsteps of the ancients, but developed a style peculiar to himself. His power was greatest in landscape, after which he excelled most in figures, then in flowers and birds; and he was also skilful in the delineation of oxen, horses, dragons, and tigers. In drawing figures and animals, he completed his sketch with a single stroke of the brush, and of this style of working he is considered the originator."

He painted on white silk panels, toned down to a light brown tinge, exclusively with Chinese ink. His work is remarkable for leaving certain portions of his pictures entirely unpainted. He arrived at great perfection in this style, and often, as, for instance, in the neck and breast of a bird, gave the illusion of modelling by means of an entire absence of touches. In his winter landscapes, he made use of the silk ground itself to give a faithful rendering of the whiteness of snow, covering trees and roofs.

In his earlier years he went to China, and, full of zeal, sought a teacher among their most renowned masters. His dexterity astonished the Chinese artists, who found but little to teach him. He was ordered to the court at Peking to paint before the emperor, and, to the great surprise of the sovereign, he produced upon a piece of silk a dragon, surrounded with clouds, with three or four splashes of his brush. Disgusted with the instruction he had received, he returned to his native land, resolved to take in the future lessons only from the mountains, rivers, and trees. And it is especially in mountains, rivers, and trees that his disciples followed his lead. His line is angular and rugged, vibrating with the nervous force of the artist's hand.

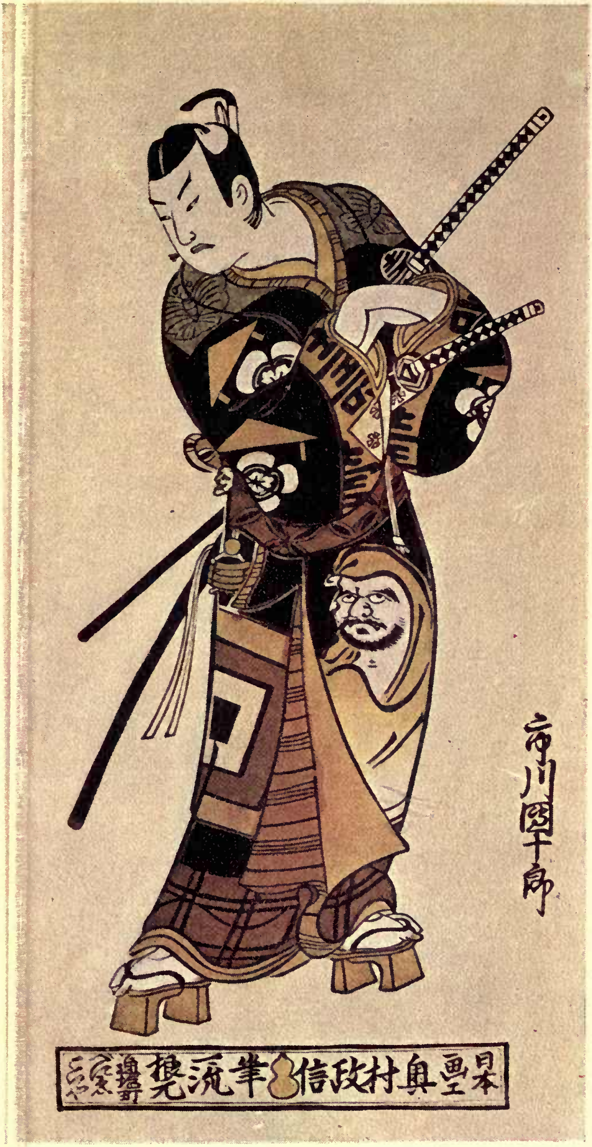
The subjects preferred by the Kano

masters were the portraits of legendary personages, romantic landscapes, *soi-disant* Chinese, and animals and plants, generally endowed with a symbolical or emblematic meaning. Saints of all orders find their place in the works of the Kano school, but instead of mystic beings, throned in ethereal regions, they show us a succession of gods, belonging to the common round of life, or affecting asceticism which appears far from austere.

The Kano school at the start had no reformatory aspirations. It was simply meant for a return to the religious period. Cho Densu endeavoured honestly to paint in the manner of the early Buddhistic painters, and to see life through primitive eyes. But the school, as is generally the case with revival movements, proved to be a renaissance.

The fifteenth century, when Sesshin and Kano Massanobu painted, is con-

Massanobu. — Portrait of the Actor, Ichikawa Danjuro


市川團十郎
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sidered the purest, the most classical period of Japanese art. It was one of those supreme occasions when the human soul, raising itself for a brief period to rare heights of fusion, has struck out at a white heat for the revelation of pure art.

The opponents of this school, of course, reproached it for the almost superstitious respect its artists paid to Chinese art and Chinese civilization in general. But these painters' adoration for China was merely a pretext for their own idealization of art. They had their own ideals ready in their minds, but found it necessary to fortify themselves with a code of precise rules, and, as China could furnish them, they went to the painters of the Hangchow period for inspiration and instruction. And there is no doubt that, without the Chinese influence, that vigour of lines, that spontaneity of touch, which reveals the painter more plainly than the object painted, which appeals to the manlier side of one's nature, which, like a simple verse of Omar, knocks the gate of the kingdom of mystery ajar, so that one's imagination might tiptoe and take a peep into the mystic beyond, would have been dwarfed in the Japanese painter.

Let me now try to initiate my reader into a few of the technical mysteries of the artist's profession, which is the leading characteristic of this school. The Japanese painter easily could carry all his worldly artistic goods in a handkerchief, and has done so invariably, even to this very day.

There is first a small roll made of fine bamboo, which serves as porte-crayon, in which are brushes of various sizes; then the Chinese ink-dish; three or four small bowls in which the colours are mixed, one for each colour; two or three small parcels containing fresh supplies of paint; two large bowls of water, a plate, and a piece of paper laid out upon the floor. In the parcels are some small sticks of brown and indigo, some red dye, a lump of gamboge, and a quantity of small white pellets. These colours, with the Chinese ink, make up the palette. The white is only mixed just before being used, and considerable skill is necessary both in the mixing and the use of it. The pellets are first crushed and ground very fine with a small glass pestle, and then mixed with melted gelatine, the whole, with a little water, being afterward ground and rubbed into a thick paste till all traces of grit have disappeared. The pigment thus prepared is quite useless when it once becomes dry and hard; it has, therefore, to be mixed afresh for every picture; but to the care with which it is prepared are due both its brilliancy and its permanence in the picture. This durability is essential, as the pictures are kept rolled, and it is only after very many years of rolling and unrolling that the white begins to show signs of perishing or peeling. The power of manipulating white, not in simple body colour only, but in thin washes, is an inheritance from the Chinese. Those who are familiar with the oldest Buddhist pictures will be familiar with the filmy veil which often falls from the head of a divinity, and is produced by the thinnest possible wash of white laid on over all the other colours, without blur or running of any kind.

The paper is slightly toned, and made in small pieces about the size of a sheet of foolscap. If larger pieces are required they are joined with rice paste. It is in the rapidly absorbent quality of this paper that Japanese artists have found most of their difficulties, and it is from the methods adopted to overcome these difficulties that most of the essential characteristics of Japanese art have sprung. The absorbence is midway between blotting and unglazed papers; what has to be done must, therefore, be done quickly; corrections are almost impossible.

Also washes of colour as executed by our Western water-colours are out of the question. But the Japanese gets at gradations of colour in his own way. The peculiar shape of the brushes enable a supply of water to be held in reserve at the hinge, the full tone required only being taken up at the point. The side of a feather, for instance, is being drawn. Directly the gradation is wanted, a little pressure brings the thicker part of the brush into play, the water escapes, and shades off the tone to the required lightness. A regular trick is used in painting a melting mist around the moon. To get this, the circle of the moon is struck in with a compass, one leg of which holds a brush full of water. This is passed around the silhouette of the moon, whereby any hard line is prevented. The fleecy cloud which obscures the moon is obtained by first damping the whole sheet of paper, and putting on washes of water, colour, and again water before it is quite dry.

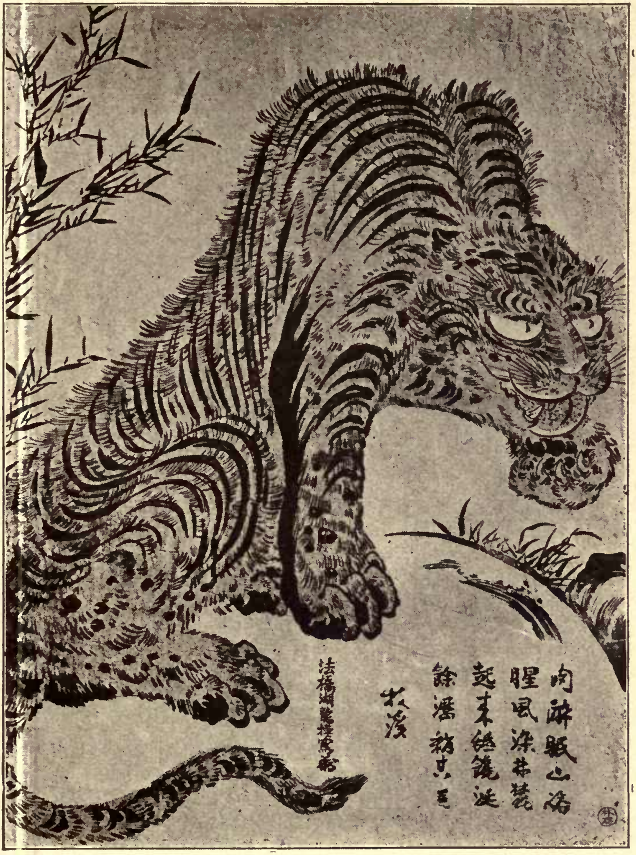
It is obvious, however, that with these methods very little colour can be used, and thence come these pale, misty moonlight effects with which we are so familiar.

The semi-absorbent quality of the paper has compensated for the many difficulties which are set in the artist's path in two ways: to the lines, drawn with a brush full of Chinese ink, it imparts a certain crispness, and, moreover, it compels rapid work, which necessity has produced a certainty of touch and a dexterity of execution, wherein lies much of the secret of the motion which Japanese artists so greatly excel in portraying.

The pictures are, however, invariably painted on silk prepared for work by being rubbed over with a fine powder, which makes the surface very much like that of the paper.

The brushes are, of course, of various sizes, but those with which the ordinary black and white pictures are painted are about the thickness of the little finger at the hinge, with hair about an inch and a quarter long and running to an exceedingly fine point. This peculiar construction allows the finest as well as the broadest strokes to be executed with the same brush.

And now, having described his materials, let us see the artist at work. The paper lies on the floor, with weights at the four corners. The artist kneels in front of it. The usual position of the brush is perpendicular to the paper, the thumb pressing it firmly against the first joint of the second finger and the third joint of the first finger close to the middle joint. The first finger itself presses lightly against the brush and helps to guide it; the little finger rests on the paper, and the left hand is placed below the right wrist as a rest; when a freer play of the arm is necessary, both rests are withdrawn. The brush is held very long, the fingers being usually three to four inches from the paper; when the strokes are very bold, the brush is often held at the end. The axis of the lines is therefore either at the point of the little finger, the wrist, the shoulder, or the knee. In drawing large subjects, the whole body is moved and becomes the reticulated joint, working from the knee as a fulcrum.



MOKKÉ — A TIGER.

The students did not draw from nature, but devoted day in and day out during an apprenticeship of eight years to a most exacting study of old masters. The student began by making a careful study of some picture, by a Chinese master like Mokké or Bunjin Jen, after which he made several copies from his own copy, and, when he had made himself thoroughly acquainted with every detail and every stroke of the original, he made a final copy which was submitted to the teacher's judgment. Then the next picture was treated in the same way; then the next, and so on.

These repetitions of the same subject may be vain from view-point of originality, from the view-point of accuracy their value can hardly be overrated. This method of instruction has been carefully worked out to the smallest detail, and made subject to rule. For every line in a bird's back or claw, a certain position of the hand and a certain inclination of the brush have been found to be necessary, and they must be learnt, acquired, and remembered. The curves and swells cannot be accomplished in any other way. For every broad mark in the body or the wing, a certain intensity of colour at the point of the brush and a certain quantity of water to be held in reserve at the hinge, a certain pressure of the fingers holding the brush and a certain motion of the entire arm, are necessary, or the colour will not shade off properly, and there will be a series of hard smudges instead of animated feathers. There is no other way of getting these feathers, just as there are no other lines which will tell so simply of the bird's flight in the air. And as the desired accuracy, to which a hairbreadth's deviation of a line proves fatal, can only be acquired by practice, the long apprenticeship entirely devoted to a free application of the brush explains itself. But when these and a hundred of other minute instructions are learnt and remembered — and he has to learn and master them until every trick and device has become second nature to his hand — the student may paint a bird cleaving the air as well as any master.

There is no doubt that such minute training lops off ruthlessly all buds of genius but the very strongest, and that the artists who survive are few and far between. But those who do survive are veritable wizards of the brush. No European master, to be sure, can vie with them in putting so much information, life, and humour into the same space of paper with so small an expenditure of labour. None of our water-colourists can realize with a few marvellous strokes, dabs, and sweeps of the brush such astonishing results as Motonobu (the son of Massanobu), Sauraku, Yeitoku, Takonobu, known as the father of three great painters, Tanyu, Naonobu, and Yasunobu, better known as Yeishi, and Tchiokuvan, whose delineations of birds, in pure black and white without any gradations, remind one involuntarily of Dürer's woodcuts.

Motonobu (1452–1490) was a most vigorous manipulator of the brush. He could give the effect and general appearance of any object with a few strokes of the brush, but each stroke tells, and each curve has a meaning. This capacity of expressing much with very little apparent effort is shown in the figure of a bird perched on a melon. A few strokes express the turn of the bird's body, and the shape of the fruit.

But if any man should ever be envied for the felicity and precision with which he handled his brush, it is Tanyu (1601–

1674), the greatest technician of them all. He was the impressionistic delineator of horses, of dragons, submarine creatures, and various beasts of the mythological zoölogy. His masterpiece, four lions painted in Chinese ink on wooden panels, can still be seen at the temple of Nikko. Also his two coloured dragons at the principal gateway of the same temple have aroused the admiration of many a connoisseur. A collection of his principal works, published the end of the eighteenth century, gives a fair idea of his remarkable talent. He was a virtuoso of curves. His style can be recognized at the first glance by the peculiar slap-dash quality of his line. The suggestiveness of his line, sometimes ranging from hair-breadth to the width of an inch, has never been surpassed. He could draw a horse in three or four sweeps of the brush; the body of a crane he realized in two strokes, and he seldom used more than three or four dozen lines to finish an entire picture.

Japanese art was now in the possession of many of its leading characteristics, as the calligraphic dexterity of brush work, the wilful neglect or exaggeration of detail, the grotesque division of space, and the economic manipulation of backgrounds which apparently look empty, and yet enhance the pictorial aspect to a rare degree. Also another quality, perhaps the most important of all, namely, the principle of repetition with slight variation, had successfully been put into use.

This peculiarity of composition possesses the principal elements of pictorial art. Its object is not to execute a perfect imitation of reality (only bad works of art do that) or a poetic resemblance of life (as our best painters produce), but merely a commentary on some pictorial vision, which sets the mind to think and dream. If the Japanese artist wants to depict a flight of cranes, he draws a half-dozen or more, which at the first glance look alike, but which on closer scrutiny are each endowed with an individuality of their own. He foregoes perspective and all other expedients; he simply represents them in clear outlines in a diagonal line or sweeping curve on an empty background, and relies for his effect upon the repetition of forms. A Western artist would expand this, at least, into a picture with a landscape or cloud effect as background; to the Japanese artist, working in the narrow bounds prescribed by custom and tradition, all such attempts would appear futile; he knows that such an event cannot be expressed more forcibly than by simply depicting the objects with only a slight variation in their representation.

The first form introduces us to the

subject, its appearance and action; the second accentuates the same impressions and heightens the feeling of reality by a slight variation in its appearance and action; and every following form, resembling at the first glance a silhouette, is simply a commentary upon the preceding one; and all together represent, so to say, a multiplication of the original idea.

And in the same manner as they treat lines and masses, they vary colour schemes, which often resemble each other, but are, nevertheless, endlessly varied in shade and line. And not only the elements of composition are guided by the law of repetition, but also the creative power of the artists. As inexhaustible as it seems, one will find that they have always treated certain lines of subjects. For instance, they have painted a crow sitting on a snow-covered fir branch, with the full moon behind, a thousand times; but every painter who has handled the subject has tried to lend it a new individuality. Only the subject remains the same. Treatment and conception are invariably changed with the personality of the artist. They have realized, by a never tiring study of variation, that a beautiful idea always remains a beautiful idea, and that it takes as much creative power to lend a new charm to an old theme as to produce and execute an apparently new one, which, after all, may prove an old one.

The year 1603 marks the beginning of that wonderful political organization known as the Takugawa Shogunate. For years the local nobles, or daimyos, defying all control by the government, had engaged in continual struggles with one another for lands and power, and a lamentable condition of anarchy had been the result. Takigawa Yyeyosu, the greatest warrior and statesman Japan has seen, after a sharp struggle, which ended in the defeat of his opponents, in the battle of Sekighara, finally succeeded to the supreme authority, and caused himself to be appointed Shogun (*i. e.* regent) by the puppet Mikado of the day.

By the organization of this remarkable system of feudal government, — the dynasty of Shoguns which lasted until 1867, — under which the nation enjoyed peace and prosperity for two and a half centuries, Yyeyosu solved for his day and country the problem which will occupy politicians to the end of time, of the due apportionment of control and local authority. At no previous period of Japanese history was the power of the central government more effectively maintained in all essential matters, although in other respects the daimyos were allowed a large measure of independent action. Under this régime Japan increased amazingly in wealth and population, and made great progress in all the arts and civilization.

As a consequence, the new capital of Yedo (Tokyo) rose rapidly to importance. To the beginning of the seventeenth century, the old city of Kyoto, which had always enjoyed the presence of the Mikado and his palaces, had been considered the centre of culture and of art, but now Yedo became her rival, and gathered unto her all the fruits of learning, of literature, and of art. The daimyos and their retainers, the samurai, compelled by regulation to live a part of the year in Yedo, increasing its population to at least a million, materially helped to bring about this displacement of the artistic and literary centre of Japan. They were all fond of luxury and an easy-going life, ever hungry for delights of the eye and elegant pleasures, and as it is only necessary in this accommodating world to express a need when somebody provides a means to satisfy it, the new city was soon overcrowded with curio-shops, workshops of artisans, and artists' studios.

Kyoto continued to be a place of some artistic activity, it even developed an exclusive "palace literature and art," but Yedo attracted to itself all the rising talents of the country, and became the cradle of a new form of art. The higher degree of civilization, which was rendered possible by an improved administration and a more settled government, included a far more widely extended system of education than the country had ever known before. And not only were the humbler classes better educated, the culture, which for so many years had belonged almost exclusively to the noble and knightly class, had worked its way into the humbler huts, and had created in the masses a certain appreciation of the beautiful. They also had grown more prosperous, and could indulge in the luxury of buying books and works of art.

Artists no longer addressed themselves exclusively to the cultured class, but the people generally. The result was a singular form of art, vacillating between new and old ideals, trying to please the common people by the introduction of democratic elements, without offending the nobler class of society.

They began to paint pictures of a popular tendency, like the "Hundred Cranes" and "Thousand Carps," showing us cranes in every imaginable position, flying, fixed in the air, standing, eating, swimming, — and all faultlessly drawn, — or a shoal of carp, as one might see it through the glass of an aquarium, floundering about it in all kinds of positions, twisting and twirling about, and fading away in the distant water.

They also entered the field of caricature, and endowed animals and inanimate objects with human features. They represent tortoises as warriors on a march. Delicious is the rendering of the clumsy reptiles' efforts to run. They show us a group of frogs, out on a picnic. Some have on hats, some carry fans, while others smoke and dance and otherwise disport themselves. Another picture shows us a cat, tortured by rats, or a man dragged in bonds by wolves, hares, rabbits, etc. Their fox pictures are also very quaint, parodying as they do a Japanese marriage and other functions of social life.

It was, however, not before the end of the seventeenth century that regular schools began to be formed which broke away from the traditional teachings of the followers of the Tosa and Kano schools.

The age of the Takugawa Shogunate could pride itself on having lent encouragement to three distinct schools of painting, and a fourth one that just came into evidence. The Buddhistic school had no great exponent, but there were still many men who adhered to Kanaoka's and Cho Densu's principles.

The Tosa school was represented by the miniaturist Mitsuoky, (1616–1691), the greatest flower painter Japan has produced. His ideals were purity of line and purity of colour. His flower pieces were models of elegance, and invariably endowed with some tender sentiment. The austerity of mediævalism has yielded to the sweetness and fancy of a triumphal epoch, losing thereby nothing of its dignity, but gaining something of gentleness and tranquillity.

The Kano school was in its prime. Tanyu was famous all over Japan. His brother, Naonobu (1607–1651), laboured for years to combine energy with delicacy of touch, and at last succeeded. He is one of the most individual of all the artists of his race. His picture of a monkey groping for the sun is one of the best known pictures of Japanese art. Yeishi, the youngest man of the illustrious Takanobu family, painted women with a greater refinement and a more thorough understanding of drapery than they had ever been painted before.

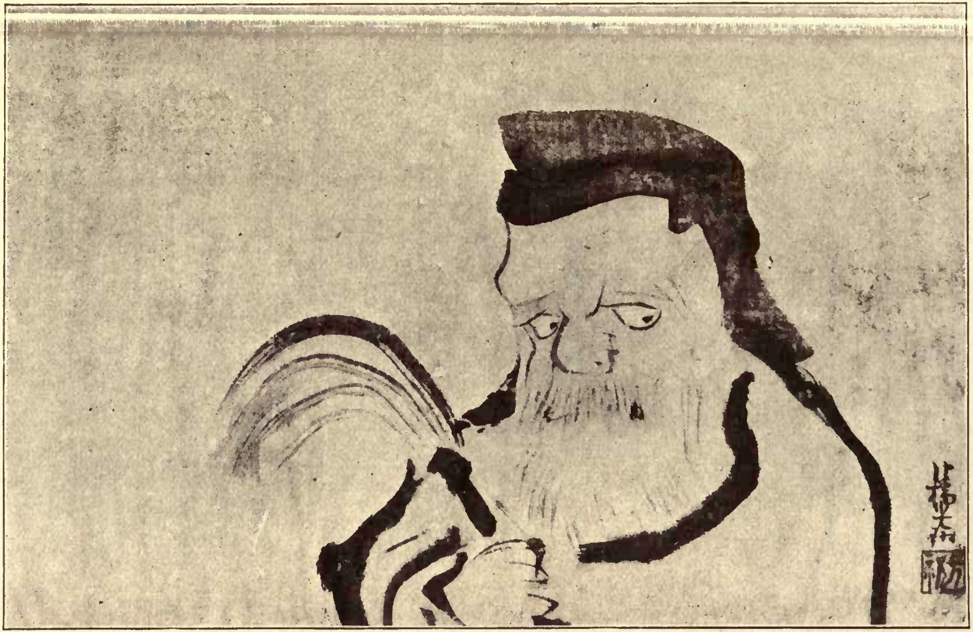
What a flapping parody in comparison is the grace of a Japanese lady in the canvas of one of our latter day artists, christened "La Princesse du Pays de la Porcelaine!"

A renown equal to that of these three men was enjoyed by Shioukada, also called Shojo, who died in 1639. He favoured large compositions and pale, flat tints. His washes were remarkably pure and expressive. They sometimes cover a surface of several square feet, and yet are perfectly even, melting almost unnoticeably into the background. His works have been published in two volumes in Yedo, 1804.

In the fifteenth century the artists had created a new style, while thinking they were imitating classic models, but it was not before the latter part of the sixteenth when the real renaissance set in and the classical ideal was followed by a realistic tendency.

The sixteen years of the Genroku period (1688–1703) which have been compared to the age of Pericles, the days of Louis XV., and the Venetian prime, were the heyday of Japanese art and culture. Art and culture seemed to have everything their own way. There were masters in every branch of art. Bashio wrote his poetry; Chikamitsu, who has been compared to Shakespeare, had his plays performed in Yedo. Pottery was represented by Ninsei and Kenzan, architecture by the great Zingaro, sculpture by Ritsuo, and the metallurgic art by Somin.

The great genius of the period was Korin (1661–1716). He was one of the first to break away from the classical ideals. There was about him not a trace of arbitrary rules or traditions. Whatever he imagined he produced immediately in a wild improvisatore fashion without troubling himself how it was done, as long as it produced an effect. He was a great colourist. His sketches in black and gold (gold powder being sprinkled over certain parts of the drawing), a style introduced by Sotatsu fifty years before, are wonderful feats of execution. Although best known as a painter, he also achieved great



Korin. — Character - Portrait

triumphs as a lacquerer. He has to be classed in the list of those eccentric geniuses who, by the very excess of their individuality, fail to put their real talent at its full value.

Of an equally radical but more practical mind was Okyo (1732–1795), the painter of morning mists, of cranes, fish, little dogs, stags and apes. He established the so-called "natural" in Shijo school about 1750. He was a great stickler for truth, resolved to paint directly from nature, without trying to embellish his work. But he could not escape his genius; he was a poet by nature, and his interpretations became poetical even against his will. His compositions possess a charming delicacy, a gracious ease, a naturalness of attitude; but they are conceived in a superficial manner; neither he nor his school were ever able to represent the inner life, or the profound character of the subjects they attempted.

The strength and violent passions, which had stamped the earlier art, were in it lacking. Okyo and his pupils shunned the sterner moods of nature, as well as the deep and tragic elements of human life. But what of pure soul there should be in infinite delicacy breathed through their work. They drew again attention to the infinite fertility of landscape motives that hide among the pine-topped islands; they proved that in the facile Japanese brush lay still unsuspected tendernesses.

The Daijo temple of Kameizan was entirely decorated by him and his pupils. Every room carries out a certain idea. The "room of mountain and water" is devoted to streams and mountains. The wall is of gold ground and rusty russet. The breath of nature seems to come ringing through the pine-needles, and the purity of the sparkling waters seems to wash all vulgar elements out of the human soul. In the "room of agriculture," he painted upon sixteen panels the history of rice — from the sowing and planting in the field to the harvest and the gathering. In the "peacock room," he lavished all his skill on a pair of peacocks under two pine-trees. A native critic said of this decoration: "No king, I do not care how great and rich in power he be, could cram under a crown one-tenth of the imperial airs and splendour which Okyo painted into the majestic carriage of these two peacocks." The "room of ambassadors" is the joint work of the two favourite pupils of Okyo, Yamanato Shurei and Kamaoka Kirei. On one side a warrior's messenger approaches the king's castle, on the other the queen is granting an audience to the ladies of the embassy.

How seriously Okyo, after all, took his art, is shown by the following story, known to every educated person in Japan, and with which I conclude this chapter, as it is typical of the patience and perseverance which Japanese artists, particularly of this period, have always demonstrated in the pursuit of their vocation:

The favourite resort of the wild boars was also the favourite haunt of Okyo. The cave in the rock, which the stream had dug with its crystal chisel, found itself, on a fine summer day, converted into a nature-made studio for the master.

Day after day, he sat in his cave-studio, always looking out at the tremulous patterns which the sun, sieving through the pine-needles, wove upon the ground and on a boar, all covered with mud, taking his siesta in a royal fashion. For hours and hours he watched the sleeping boar, and, finally, on a fine summer twilight hour, he gathered his courage and took up his brush. I do not know how many sketches, how many studies, he made of the boar; I do not know how many hours — at the close of day when the mountain silence was full of the whisperings of pine-needles — he had spent in his cave-studio. One night, the hunters of Hozu village were very much surprised to welcome a strange guest around their evening fire. The strange guest spoke to them of the life of the mountain, of his love for the folks of the woods: he told them how much he had envied their open-air occupation. At last, he took out from the breast folds of his kimono a roll of paper. When he unrolled it, the hunters saw a picture of the wild boar.

"What do you think of it? Is it the picture of a dead boar? Do you think it is dead?" the visitor said.

Without a word, the hunters looked

upon it. They seemed a little puzzled at first, and then a bolder one among them gave voice to the common sentiment:

"Why, yes, I guess it is dead."

And the visitor went away. Almost every day, the hunters saw the same stranger around their evening fire. And every night the pine flames and the eyes of the hunters kindled upon a clever picture of a dead boar. The visitor asked them the same question every time, and the hunters gave him answers that were different neither in words nor intent. And sadly always, the visitor went his lonely way into the shades of night. But one night he came; brought with him, as usual, the picture of a boar. He asked the same old question of the hunters. But the hunters did not give him the wonted answer.

"Why, no!" they said, "this boar is alive; it's asleep, that is all."

And light came into the eyes of the visitor, and he made his way all through the village of Hozu. In every cottage the answer which was given to him was the same. And in the man who went away from Hozu village, in the fading hours of that night, one could see the very picture of triumph, of an exceeding great joy.

And that is the story they tell. Now Okyo knew very well that those hunters of Hozu village, without the thinnest taint of academic culture or of schooling, could tell at a single glance, and that, too, at the distance of many a yard, whether a boar is dead or alive. And when the consensus of opinion told him that his picture was the picture of a sleeping boar, he was quite sure that he had achieved, for the first time, the feat of painting the fine and very delicate distinction between death and sleeping life.

CHAPTER IV.

THE REALISTIC MOVEMENT

THE UKIO-YE SCHOOL (1700–1867)

TOWARD the middle of the seventeenth century the first faint traces of an influence of Western pictorial art became palpable. The artist Iwasa Matahei was probably one of the first who got interested in occidental laws of composition, his knowledge being gathered largely from stray copper engravings which the Portuguese and Dutch traders had brought with them to Japan. Also Okyo made various attempts in imitating the Dutch; he even copied several engravings for a rich amateur of Nagasaki.

Although these experiments had at the start no decided effect on the Japanese style, they helped to free it more and more from the shackles of Chinese tradition. The artists were initiated into the laws of perspective and foreshortening, first put in practice by Kokan of Nagasaki (1747–1818), and became acquainted with the study from nature and life as practised by Western artists. Shibukohan, Oado, and the lacquerer Kenzan became the most ardent champions of this innovation.

Iwasa Matahei, who became famous about 1640, only changed his range of subjects. He was the first Japanese painter who ever tried to represent subjects which predecessors deemed unworthy of art: the scenes of every-day life. One of the common people, without rank and without pride of blood, he threw himself whole-heartedly into the study of the many entertaining phases of the life of common people. The idyl of a rustic love, the sports of children, the dance, the songs, the festivals of simple village folks, the display of crowded market-places, and also the somewhat shadier sides of life, real and full of soft tints — these appealed to him, overwhelmed his enthusiasm, and captured his dreams.

His brush covered large and various fields, and his ink dishes compassed great possibilities of colours. He caught the samurai and the market-men at their merrymaking under the cherry-trees in spring, and it is hard to tell in words how much of grace and unstudied elegance he put into the poses and movements of dancing-girls, and of that entertaining class of women whom we call the geisha to-day. He took rich red, green, yellow, and black, and made them dwell in perfect harmony on his silk, although his colouring is not of the simplest, striving more for richness than the elegance of monochrome.

Toil was the only reward for his work. Without vanity, ever refusing to take himself seriously, like our American painter, Gustav Verbeck, always fond of making fun of any ambitious dreams that might have sprouted in his head, he wished that he, and he alone, might be satisfied. To-day kept on becoming to-morrow, and always he went on without taking thoughts as to his food or raiment. He was always satisfied as long as his stomach did not cry to him too loudly. The reason why it is so very difficult to find a kakemono with his signature upon it, is because he could so rarely persuade himself that it is worth any man's while — his least of all — to sign his name to the work that came from his brush. This lack of signature has been an eternal regret to the critics of latter days. But this absence of signature has really made his work better recognizable than that of many other artists, and at the same time has told over and over again a very eloquent story of the high ideals held by Matahei, which he had ever striven to attain, which had made him always dissatisfied and unhappy, and which also made him a better artist as the days grew.

Matahei exerted a considerable influence upon succeeding generations, and his principles, carried out by two men of genius, Moronobu (1638–1714) and Hanabusa Itcho, who both became famous by their *genre* paintings, gave rise to the Ukio-ye or "common" school. This, however, was not fully established until fifty to sixty years later, about 1700, by the contemporaries of Okyo, the great artist who, although not fully in sympathy with the Ukio-ye painters, dealt the death-blow to the Kano school by his innovations.

About 1680, wood-engraving came into vogue. It greatly helped to popularize art. The artists, unable to satisfy the demand for kakemonos, welcomed the process of reproduction with enthusiasm, and many of them turned illustrators. Many phases of life they never had dared to represent on a kakemono could be expressed with impunity in the new medium, as the *oribons* (*i. e.* picture-books) and serial prints only appealed to the middle classes. The nobility had no use for them; they were "vulgar creations," unfit to be handled by a lady of rank. They never bought them, and even to-day do not rank them highly.

Moronobu, who made a specialty of illustrating the historical events that had happened in different provinces and towns, worked almost exclusively for the engravers. He was the first, also, who represented actors in art. Itcho, on the other hand, had no device to multiply his productions. He was a painter pure and simple. He is remarkable not only for the spirit and gaiety which is characteristic of a great many of his paintings, but also for his method, in which one must admire the expressive use of the brush.

The history of wood-engraving is, to a large extent, the history of the Ukio-ye school itself, and our Western knowledge of Japanese art would be very deficient if we had to depend solely on "wall pictures."

In the beginning only black and white single sheets were produced. Moronobu and Husuyuma Moro were the leading exponents of the Dürer-like woodcuts.

After awhile, they began to colour the

prints with reddish orange, and called them the "tan" prints. Torii Kiyonobu (1664–1729) and Kiyamasa made drawings for this kind of prints. A little later they mixed a kind of glue, called *nikawa*, with the Chinese ink, to give the effect of varnish. They also used gold paint, and called them "lacquer prints." Okumura Massanobu (1690–1768), whose short curves almost possessed the purity of Greek line, Nishimura Shigenaga (1697–1756), and others, had some of their best efforts reproduced in that way. In the Kyoto school, about 1740, they tried polychrome prints for the first time, and the prints thus reproduced in light green were called "rose prints."

This curious combination of two fragile tints with black outlines was explored to the best advantage by Kiyonobu, Ichigawa Toyonobou (1711–1783), and Torii Koyomitsu (1735–1785). This work be-longs to the best Japanese colour-printing has produced.

About 1765, an engraver by the name of Kinroku for the first time produced prints which passed through four or five impressions, and Suzuki Haronobu (1718-1770) and Buntcho have been interested in this type of prints. Colour has probably never been used in a more refined and more *raffiné* manner than by these artists. The tints they applied were merely hints at colour. They were of a paleness which set one to dreaming without paying attention to what the picture represented. And because these prints were exceedingly fair to the eye, and attractive, the people of the time called them *nishikie*, which means "brocade pictures." Although at the end of the eighteenth century, Nishikawa, Soukenobu and other artists of Kyoto were trying to cope with the painters of the Yedo brocade pictures, they did not succeed in outshining them, and from that time on, the brocade prints of Yedo became one of the famous products of the city.

The prints of Koriusa, Shighemassa and Shunsho mark a transition period. They strove for more colour, but still hesitated to use it in its full strength. It was left to Torii Kiyonaga (1752–1815) to accomplish this. He returned to the ideals of the Tosa school.

The colours he relied upon were the following: Clear yellow, dark chestnut, red-brown, clear orange, mastic white, silver white, vermilion, brilliant violet, black, and brown lacquer. To heighten the brilliancy of their effect, he introduced the device of passing a rice paste upon the wood block each time before spreading the colour.

Other artists besides the painter have contributed to bring about the perfection of these colour prints—artists whose names, except in the rarest instances, have perished with them even in Japan. Work equal to theirs is common enough there, but is rare enough here to merit something more than a passing notice.

First, there is the artist engraver. What finished pieces of workmanship are the blocks he cuts! How the lines sweep from his knife with the same unerring grace with which they sprang into life from the brush! Never a quiver, or shake, or tremble, to rob them of a particle of their dexterous force. Look at the faces of any of the women and see how steady are the lines of the contour, and how wonderfully fine and clear those of the hair as it leaves the forehead.

And then there is the artist printer, who spreads the ink upon the blocks so carefully that every line comes clearly from the hand-pressing, not one of them smudged or blurred. Really, I am not sure whether the place of honour should not be given to the printer. He might have marred the work of the engraver, and spoilt the effect the painter sought for, his methods of printing being the crudest and most unpatentable; yet, instead of marring, he has added beauties, and left the mark of his own individuality upon the print. His methods were perfect, and perfectly simple. In their chromo-xylographs, the faults of register are very few and far between — even the magnifying glass fails to reveal any places where one colour-block has in printing been allowed to envelop another — the reason being that this method of printing did not permit any faults of register.

To know whether an old print is authentic or not, one has simply to study the register; if it deviates only a hair-breadth from the space allotted to it, its authenticity becomes doubtful. I would advise print collectors to purchase only prints with an absolutely perfect register. No price is too high, as such prints will steadily increase in value; while the others are really, artistically as commercially, unprofitable possessions.

In contrast to the Western principle of pressing the block on the paper, and thus obtaining the impression, the Japanese, dispensing with the mechanical means of a press, lays the paper on the block, and pats the paper with simple *tampons* or "barens." He can regulate and modify the pressure at end where he wishes, and thus obtain the gradated tints and half-tones that are so important an element of the charm of Japanese colour prints. When the colour in the picture is shaded, he also shades the tone in the block for every printing, and reproduces it in one pressure. In prints of the highest class two or three colours will often be found shaded in this way. Herein lay the chance for the printer to use his mind as well as his hand, and to prove himself also an artist, and not only a workman.

The value of these colour prints, on which so much art was lavished, was entirely underestimated. They sold so cheaply, that the purchasers handled them rather roughly; they were absolutely careless about their preservation, to such an extent that prints of masters who flourished from 1720–1750 are now unprocurable, even in a tattered condition. Sometimes the single sheet prints were preserved in books, whence they occasionally emerge with their colours almost in primitive purity. But they were more often posted on screens, especially on small screens which sheltered the hibachi (charcoal stove) from the too frequent drafts of a Japanese house. Rain, wind, dust, smoke of tobacco and of charcoal, each took a share in their destruction. They perished soon, and were soon replaced. The stock was plentiful, was, indeed, being augmented daily, and the price was ridiculously small.

In a land so brimful of art as Japan, it was not surprising, perhaps, that such conceptions did not hold a very high place. But to the rest of the world, which has not, or never had, any popular art to speak of, it is only natural that they quickly appealed to us as not the least among the many art marvels which Japan had in store.

The pages which have been allotted to me are not numerous enough to permit an excursus on all the masters and pupils of the great Ukiyo-ye school. Comparatively few can be mentioned.

The reader may have been astonished at the similarity of names of certain artists.

This is, however, easily explained. It is customary for pupils to introduce a character of their master's name into their own. This greatly simplifies the study of Japanese painting, as, for instance, all those who were privileged to take into their names the *kuni* of Toyokuni, the vigorous depicter of stage life, — Kunimara, Kunisada, Kunimasa, — have mentally as well as technically something in common with Toyokuni, who himself took *toyo*, like Toyohami, the painter of night festivals, and Toyoshiri, the depicter of animated crowds, from his master, Toyoharu. One is in that way able to trace relationship between the different artists.

The class of artists who have the character *Yei* — Yeishi, Yeiri, Yeizan, and Yeisen — was devoted almost exclusively to the charms and graces of Japanese womanhood. The linear beauties of these representations impress one like a nautch, like some languid Oriental dance, in which the bodies undulate with an almost imperceptible vibration. Everything is aerial here; it is a world of visions, of fragile, fairy creatures, separated from the rest of the world by mysterious garments, which enwrap them and seem to float around them like a dream. Amber faces, very pure outlines, the eyelids and eyelashes singularly long, dark eyes, surcharged with languor and vague passion, and at the same time serious, and with the dignity of well-bred women. They pass their days, idly reclining, wrapped in their silken draperies, in which you can see the pine, the bamboo, the crane, and the turtle worked in gold and silk, amusing themselves with their flowers, their goldfish, and their miniature gardens. Or one of them takes her samisen and fills the empty, screen-encompassed space with some sad and confused melody. We see them arranging their hair in one of the fourteen classic styles known to the Yedo belle, darkening their lips, or arching their eyebrows with tiny sticks of grease paint before curiously shaped mirrors, reflecting the nonchalant expressions of their faces. And their garments, stiff and cumbersome, flash in sun and moon-coloured hues.

The Japanese artists see in woman a glorification of all beautiful things. They even have studied the natural grace of willow, plum, and cherry trees to find the correct expression of her movements and poses.

The Shijo school was strongly in evidence in the latter half of the eighteenth century. There were Yosen (1752–1818), Goshen, the landscapist, and Sosen (1747–1821). The latter became known for his pictures of monkeys. He devoted his whole life to the study of animals, and his pictures are high priced in England

and America. Goshen was one of the great colourists of the new school, and had many pupils, among them Hakkei, the painter of insects and butterflies, Lenzan, the depicter of birds, and Shohizan, whose twigs of cherry blossom were sufficient to make him immortal. Besides these were Seisen, Gakurei, Zaitu and Kaikatei, Kioko, Kuokudo, and Tetsusan.

Perhaps the most talented of Okyo's followers was Nishiyama Hoyen, who died in 1867, at the age of sixty-four. Religious painting, which had ceased to be great since the sixteenth century, received in his grace and tender spirituality its final efflorescence. His painting of the sea-goddess, Kwannon, which all great artists, Chinese and Japanese, have represented, is not as grand and overpowering as Monotobu's. But it is a thoroughly sweet and womanly Kwannon, an expression of the more gentle and feminine moods in Buddhism, corresponding to the worship of the Holy Virgin in Catholic countries. "Clothed in a single robe of spotless white, enveloping her like a thought, dominating her head like a crystal crown, she sits among the jagged rocks of a shore, the great overshadowing spirit of pity, love, and providence." In this work Hoyen has given us no pictorial repetitions. It is a new pictorial creation, built on a new thought.

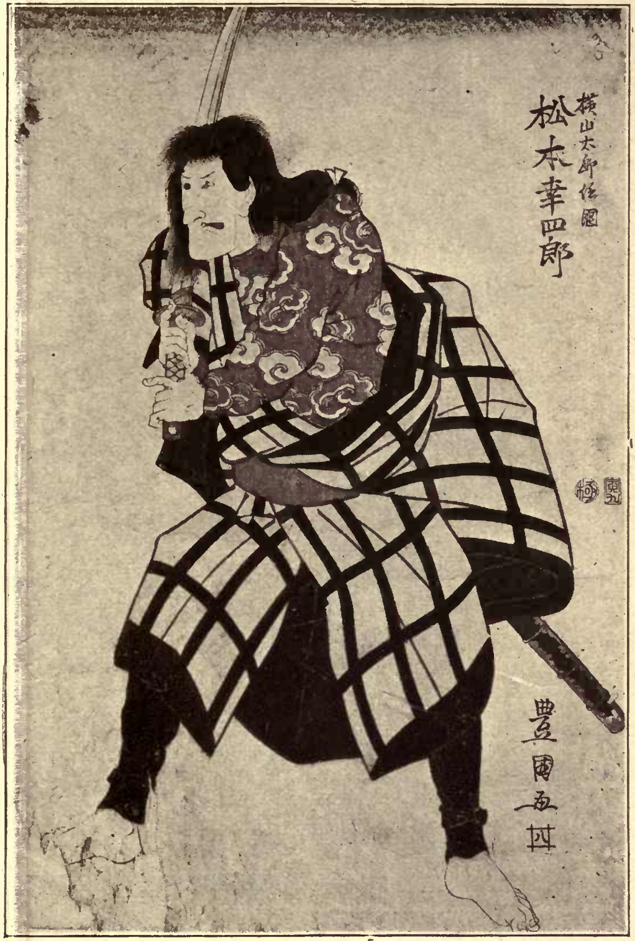
But Hoyen did not only deal successfully with the human figure and serious religious work, he also realized in his landscapes the highest possibilities of his style. The debasement, the exaggeration, the appeal to vulgar feeling, the dominance of the comic, which often deface the accomplishments of modern Oriental art, are in Hoyen utterly lacking. Almost alone among his contemporaries, he kept his eyes fixed on the spiritual heights of the Tosa and Kano masters, while preserving perfect originality.

The painters of the Ukio-ye school had rather a hard time in the meanwhile. They were dependent on publishers and print-sellers, and many of them led a rather precarious existence. They accepted whatever commission fell into their hands — now drawing for the engravers sketches that appeared in albums, now decorating the panels of a temple or mansion, now dashing off a rough colour sketch at the rate of a few cents a sheet, now wandering off into the country with some congenial spirit to enjoy life entirely after their own fashion, and to take what chance might throw in their way.

The reformatory work that had been begun by Moronobu and Itcho was continued by Miyagawa Chosun. He did not restrict himself to the narrow limits of the later Kano pigments, reds, yellows, blues, and greens, but enriched them all with a new scale of strange browns, olives, purples, and grays. He drew his figures very much like Moronobu, only less harsh in outline, while his backgrounds were treated in the dashy style of Sesshin. The eighteenth century was an age of splendid patterns in garments, large sweeping areas of patterns, as distinguished from the finely diapered garments of the Genroku period, and Chosun was very fond of drawing them, as they lend themselves so easily to colour schemes. He put in a dash of colour here and there where one least expected it, a trick he had learned of Korin and Kenzan. His favourite subjects were street scenes of Yedo. His best known works are "Hundred Poets," "Fans," and "Mirror of Beauty," perhaps the most beautiful picture-books ever produced.

Other painters who greatly helped the popular movement were Teisan, the two brothers, Torii Kiyonobu and Torii Kiyomitsu, Buntcho, Toyokusi, Haronobu, and Soukenobu.

Kiyonobu (1664–1729) became famous for his arrangement in rose and green. He exhausted these two colours completely. No European artist to my knowledge has ever balanced these two colours so perfectly. Buntcho (1765–1801), retained all his life by a prince, indulged in historical researches, and the depiction of actors, very original both in design and colour feeling. Ever since Chikamitsu's dramas had become popular, there had been a rage for actor prints. Nearly all artists devoted some sheets to this hitherto so degraded profession. Toyokuni, and later Kuniyoshy (1796–1861), seemed particularly adapted to this work. The violence of dramatic gesture, although


横山太郎俊國
松本幸四郎
豊國画

KUNIYOSHY. — A RONIN.

exaggerated almost to the verge of the ridiculous, are masterly rendered by them.

Kuniyoshy, in particular, was a wild, unrestrained talent, with an imagination that was neither to bend nor to break. His fantastic landscapes were a positive rejection of all the theories and established rules of æstheticism. His illustrations of the "Forty-seven Ronins," the national drama of loyalty and revenge, made him popular all over the islands. Two pupils of Buntcho, Totsugen and Bumpo, became very popular through their numerous albums of caricatures.

Soukenobu created a peculiar type of woman, plump young girls with round and laughing faces. They were unlike those of any other Japanese artist. Seated or standing under flower branches, at the bases of graceful trees, walking in the fields or flowery garden bowers, they always have a grace of their own. He is the poet of the Japanese young girl, decorated with fans, in a long robe which winds from her feet in undulating folds, in the landscape of a dream, peopled with fairy birds caroling to the gods.

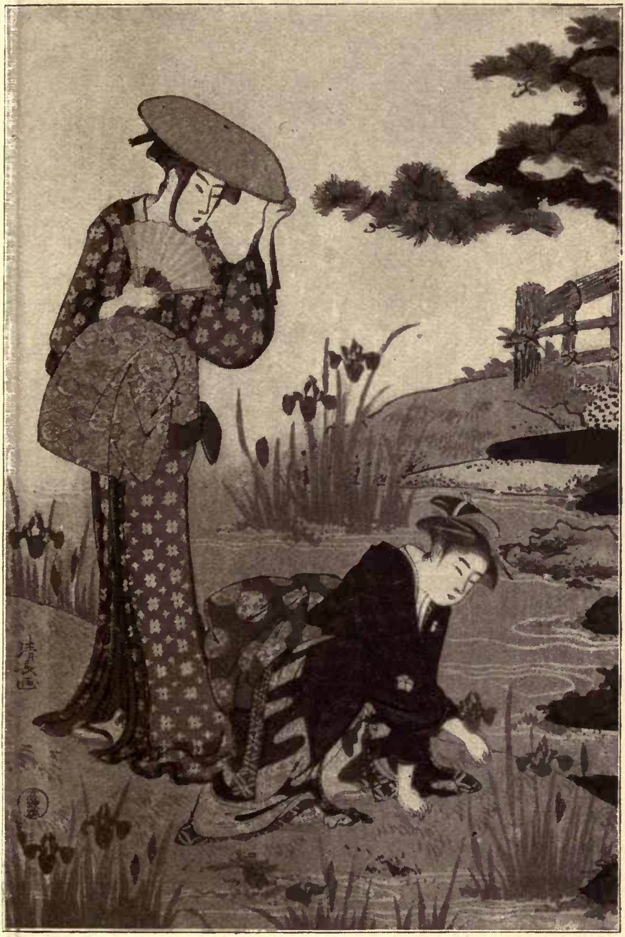
Suzuki Haronobu (1765) was more of a revolutionary spirit. He endeavoured to remove the stigma of vulgarity which still clung to his school. "Though I work in prints," he proudly exclaimed, "I shall style myself hereafter 'master painter of the national school of Japan.'"

He possessed a governing spirit, ideas of his own, and irreverence for the conventions, thanks to which he was destined to become the admirable painter he was. He was the loving delineator of the domestic life of the middle classes. He had very curious ideas of form, but his line had a beautiful flow and swing to it. He saw everything in colour, and was able to invest a morsel of nature with its natural harmony of light. It was really he who introduced atmosphere into Japanese painting. By the power of mental isolation, of concentration in himself, of absorption of his faculties in nature only, and by the positive rejection of all theories and established rules of æstheticism, of all that had not for its motive the living present, his eye refined itself to all the swift reflections, the subtle quiverings, the fleeting effects of light in nature. His hand grew, at the same time, more supple and strong in its grasp of the unforeseen and unexpected aërial effects which revealed themselves to him; while his palette became clear, joyous, luminous, fluent with sunlight and permeated by the brightness of the sky. His favourite colours were green, purple, and low-toned oranges.

Independent of the realistic movement worked Tchikuden and Hoitsu. Tchikuden became known in Europe by a masterpiece of natural simplicity, an eagle perched on a rock, overlooking the sea. Although replete with personal qualities, one can trace in him the influence of the Kano school.

Hoitsu (1716–1828) a daimyo by birth, painted for pleasure. He studied in many studios, but found that the ideals of the Tosa school, with a few modifications, were best suited to flower painting, which was his specialty. He had a very talented pupil in Kiitsou. The morning-glories, full of dew, with a suggestion of the waning moon behind, are deliciously rendered.

In their delineations of flowers, these two painters succeeded in reviving all the graces of their delicate organism, the almost inexpressible tenderness of their fleeting forms, the living brightness and glory of their colours, and even the



KIYONAGA. — PICKING IRIS.

unsubstantial exhalations of their perfumes.

Toward 1795, when Kiyonaga, the son of Kiyomitsou sprang into sudden fame, the Ukio-ye school had become a school of national importance. It had proven its worth, and prejudice concerning it had grown less strong.

They had gone forth into the streets of Yedo, elated with love for their native city, and quivering with inspiration. They were fascinated by the inexhaustible variety of her sights and scenes, and they had allowed their vagabond fancy to absorb the splendour of light and colour which pervaded all these scenes of popular life. They had learned to look at objects in a more rational way; their knowledge of form had marvellously improved; they did not longer disregard shadows entirely, and, if their perspective is incorrect from our point of view, it is wilfully so, for the landscapes on some of their lacquer trays of that period show that even inferior artists had mastered it.

Kiyonaga (1752–1818) led the Ukio-ye to greater height of technical perfection than it had ever reached before. He was a direct forerunner of Hokusai, one of the greatest draughtsmen in a time when good draughtsmen were the rule. His brush-stroke has a tremendous vigour, as shown in his paintings. He revelled in air and action. Picnic parties, groups at the temples, dances, crowds on holidays were his special forte. Human forms leaped as if alive from his restless brush. He left behind him a remarkable series of works.

One volume is devoted to landscape, another to flowers, a third to fishes, and several others contain, in very animated outlines, sketches of ordinary life. He was very careless in detail; his ink simply rained down on the paper, and

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Kunisada. — On the River

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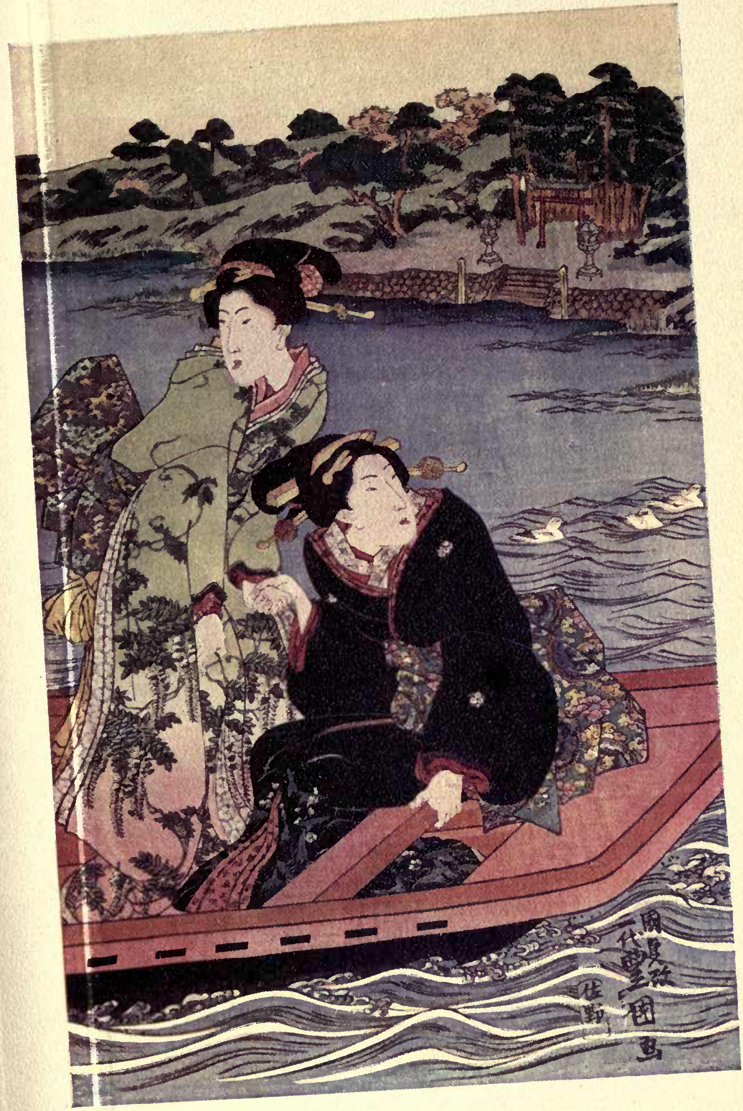

國貞改
二代豊国画
佳勢

gained outlines and accents entirely by the certainty of his hand and eye. He cared only for the general appearance of objects, treating everything in silhouette, and with sketchy modelling.

Many other artists could be mentioned as Kunisada, Nagahura, the embodiment of elegance, Ganka, Shigenaga, Shosizan, Torei, Morofusa, Morinaga, Motonaga, Tsunenobu, the painter of peacocks and giant chrysanthemums, and his pupils Tchikonobu and Minenubo, Taigado and Bunlei, two belated Kano painters, and many others.

But one must refrain. As said before, it is impossible to mention them all. Each one had some distinguishing trait. Their works, painted or engraved, charm at first sight by the variety of subjects and attitudes which can be found in the reproductions of no other period.

The greatest merit of the Ukio-ye

school, however, is that it has given us three great artists, in which almost the whole of Japanese pictorial art seems to be summed up for the Western world, — Outomaro Kitagawa (1753–1805), Hiroshige (1797–1868), and Hokusai (1760–1849).

Outomaro is known as the greatest painter of Japanese women. He cared less for severity and purity of expression than his predecessors. He disdained the round and stumpy figures of Chinese origin by Soukenobu, and the robust and sculpturesque women of Kiyonaga; he sacrificed everything to delicacy of treatment. The shades of expression in his women are so delicate and transient, the impression of their charm so fleeting, their features and their type so hovering between prettiness and ugliness, that even his crones seemed as if they might once have been pretty as the prettiest maidens, whose grace the slightest touch of change would mar.

He also had a larger conception of his subject. He did not merely strive for external beauty. He represented the Japanese woman in all the various phases of her domestic life, and with a keenness of observation which almost borders on psychological insight. He represented her in her babyhood, carried on the back of her mother, as child, as young girl, playing the samisen, or studying the "Collection of One Thousand Leaves," as sweetheart under the plum-tree, as young wife going through the tea ceremony, as mother, as adultress or adventuress, and finally in her old age. He penetrated as far as it is possible to go into the feminine mode of life.

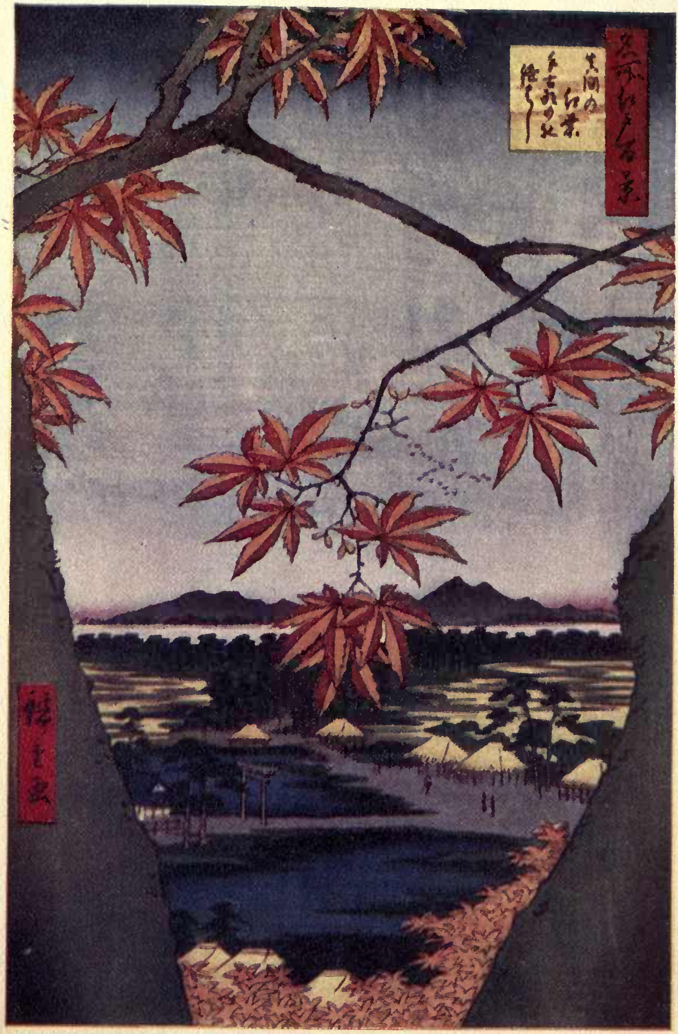
He was also very fond of depicting the life of actresses, of geishas, and the inmates of the green houses of the Yoshiwara. This is probably the reason why so many critics have called him a sensualist. To me he is the most ethereal of painters. True enough, he was a man of easy morals, and greatly addicted to pleasure, who spent the largest part of life in the Yoshiwara, and finally died of constitutional exhaustion at the age of fifty. But his art he took seriously. He eliminated everything that might have appeared fleshly or physical. He used geishas and courtesans as models because they seemed more graceful to him, and because he could study them at leisure. In his pictures women, even if they represent courtesans, look invariably like princesses. Æsthetically dissatisfied with the small size of his countrywomen, he drew them taller and slenderer, and imbued their elongated shapes with infinite tenderness and grace. His serial "Silk-worms," in which he depicted the

"Forty-seven Ronins," as represented by the most beautiful women, is the masterpiece of his career The workmanship of these pages is exquisite, and the beauty and delicacy of forms and flowing lines has never been excelled.

Not content with the representation of figures and scenes in single engravings, the artists of this time produced compositions spreading over several leaves. Outomaro was particularly fond of triptychs. As a colourist, he ranks with the best of the Ukio-ye school. His colour schemes were mostly conceived in four tints, a deep black, a tender white, a pink of the colour of rose-leaves, and a sombre, melancholy violet.

Outomaros are oftener offered for sale than any other colour prints, but comparatively few are authentic. He was a very prolific artist, but, as he enjoyed a great reputation in his own lifetime, he became somewhat unscrupulous. In order to increase his production he employed a certain number of pupils to work with him, whose works were signed with his name. Moreover, after his death his widow married one of his pupils, who signed the name of the dead man to his own work, and, in addition, the publishers themselves appear to have long continued to employ others of his pupils who always made use of his name. The number of prints signed with the name Outomaro is enormous. But all of these are very far from possessing the charm, the elegance, and the high qualities of those which are really due to the master.

Hiroshige, generally regarded as the foremost landscape painter of Japan, was born at Yedo and was a pupil of Toyohiro. His earliest work was a series of views of Mount Fusiyama, dated 1820. His masterpieces, however, including the


名所江戸百景
真間の紅葉手古那の社継はし
廣重画

Hiroshige. — A Landscape

"Go-jiu-sen Eki Tokaido" ("Fifty-three Stations of the Tokaido"), were published after 1845, in the decline of his life. He died of cholera during the great epidemic of 1858.

Hiroshige's favourite subjects were the scenes of every day in and around Yedo, and along the picturesque highway connecting Yedo with Kyoto. He had settled down with the determination to conquer the beauties of nature within the vicinity of his native town. These he knew from childhood, and they appealed to him most strongly. Nearly every artist had already painted the Tokaido, but Hiroshige tackled it in an entirely novel manner. Like Monet he was satisfied with one subject, but represented it in all hours of the day, in all seasons of the year, and in all conditions of the atmosphere. He completely exhausted the subject. Two artists of considerable talent, Shunchosai and Settan, who, some years later, treated the same subject in a similar manner, had nothing new to add. Their works resemble topographical handbooks; they lack Hiroshige's power of invention, his keen observation of traffic and animated crowds, his firm pencil and instinct for colour. He was the first landscape painter who gave to his foreground figures almost as conspicuous a part as the landscape itself.

He was an innovator in many respects. He had picked up a few ideas upon the European theories of perspective, and constantly made use of them. His vanishing-points were not always in the right place, but on the whole his compositions greatly gained in reality by these experiments. He also recognized the existence of projecting shadows, and introduced faithful reflections of the moon and lanterns into his pictures, an accomplishment which was sternly tabooed by the older artists.

He also drew birds, flowers, and caricatures, but they are mediocre productions. His originality only revealed itself in his landscape works. His "Fifty-three Stations of the Tokaido," printed in colours, and his "Pictorial Description of Yedo," in twelve volumes, and "Views of the Tokaido," both printed in black and pale blue, are of permanent value. The appearances of rain, mist, and wind, the frigidity of the snow-laden streets and fields, the vague colours of night, have rarely been more faithfully represented.

It is life, in fact, which fills his picture with virile spirit, and breathes into them a new and astonishing vitality. It is the life of the air, of the water, of odours, and of lights; the ungraspable and invisible life of the spheres, synthesized with an admirable boldness and an eloquent audacity, which are the product of delicacy of perception, and the indication of a superior comprehension of the great harmonies of nature. The nuptial gaieties of the spring, the burning drowsiness of summer, the anguishes of the autumn on its bed of purple, under its canopies of gold; the splendid and cold bridal vestments of the winter — in all of them life is resuscitated and triumphant. And in all this resplendency of nature, nothing is left to the chance of inspiration, however happy, nor to the hazard of an accidental brush-stroke, however facile and spirited.

His colouring was as simple as it was superb. A sea painted apparently with one sweep of indigo, lined with mountains expressed in a few daubs of violet, and some calligraphic flourishes in red and green, representing a bridge and trees, were sufficient to produce an exquisite colour harmony. Two charming colours which are very noticeable in his landscapes are the green of oxidized metal, as seen at old weather-beaten temple gates, and the deep crimson of lacquer. They are a little difficult to reproduce with our Western colours, but I am informed that cobalt green renders the former, and Rubens madder, with dragon's blood for the shadow, the tone of the lacquer almost exactly.

The greatest exponent of the realistic school is Hokusai, a pupil of Shunsho, who, dying at the age of eighty-nine, left behind hundreds of kakemonos, and eighty serial works in over five hundred volumes.

All the sterling qualities of his predecessors seem to have concentrated in this fertile genius. The "Mangwa," a collection of sketches in fourteen volumes, and the "One Hundred Views of Fusiyama," which have made his name familiar to the Western world, fail to give a complete idea of his genius. They bear witness to his marvellous versatility, to the virility of his line-work, and to the harmony of his colours, but they do not compare with his paintings, especially those which represent the human form and the tranquil scenes of popular life.

The visitor to Japan encounters Hokusai's types at every step. He has immortalized his countrymen, walking about in straw rain-coats and immense mushroom-shaped hats, and straw sandals: bareheaded peasants, deeply burned by wind and sun; patient mothers with smiling bald babies upon their backs, toddling by upon their high wooden clogs; and robed merchants squatting and smoking their little brass pipes among the countless riddles of their shops.

The "Mangwa" is a universal kaleidoscope, where everything and every type of being jostle each other in a picturesque confusion, an endless panorama in which nothing escapes the keen analysis of the artist and observer. There are a set of fat people, and a set of lean people, a procession of drunkards, beggars, and studies of old men and women, national heroes, fabulous animals, demons and apparitions. He has sketched all the curious antics of which gymnasts and acrobats are capable. He has reproduced the masks of the ancient religious, the No dances, masks with exaggerated expressions, masks of demons, or animals and grotesque personages. We see country folks at their daily avocations. He introduced us into the workshops of artisans — wood-carvers, smiths, metal workers, dyers, weavers, and embroiderers pass review. He only held aloof from the theatre and the Yoshiwara.

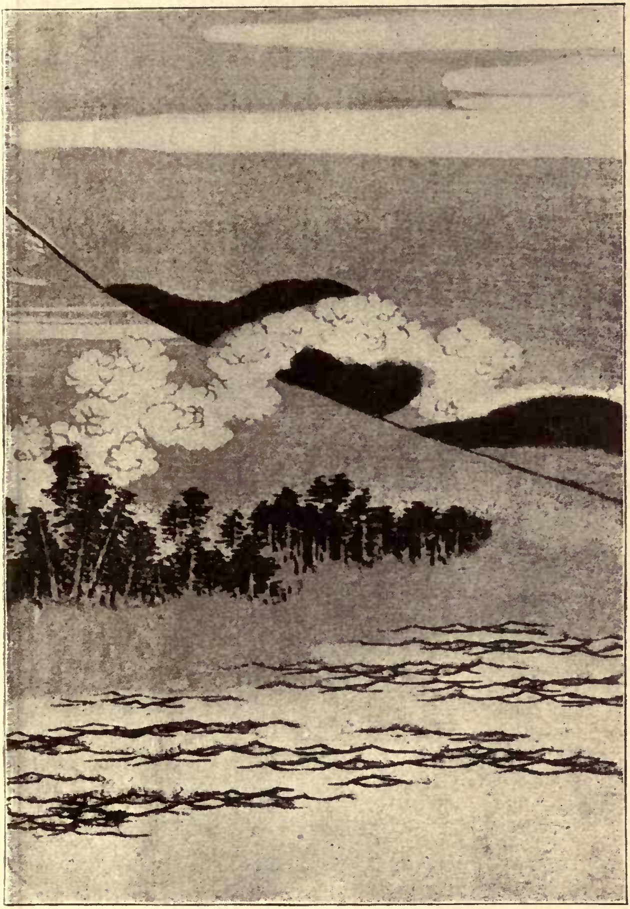
Notwithstanding the directness, sometimes a little rude, of his method, no one has analyzed nature, the character and details of things, and the living appearance of figures, with more ease, intelligence, and penetration.

Like all great artists, he was never satisfied with his work. He wrote at the age of seventy-five these humourous and heartfelt words: “From my sixth year on a peculiar mania of drawing all sorts of things took possession of me. At my fiftieth year I had published quite a number of works of every possible description, but none were to my satisfaction. Real work began with me only in my seventieth year. Now at seventy-five the real appreciation of nature wakens within me. I therefore hope that at eighty I may have arrived at a certain power of intuition, which will develop further until my ninetieth year, so that at the age of one hundred I can proudly assert that my intuition is thoroughly artistic. And, should it be granted to me to live one hundred and ten years, I hope that a vital and true comprehension of nature may radiate from every one of my lines and dots."

(You see, Hokusai is more modest than some of our Western artists!)

Hokusai was as proficient in landscapes as in figures. His serial of Eleven Waterfalls shows his fidelity to and respect for nature. The movement of the water, the outline of the rocks; the local colour and particular details of each scene, are marvellously rendered.

Study, it matters not what picture of Hokusai's and you will see that even the smallest details of which they are composed are logically in sympathy with one another, that even the smallest blade of grass and slenderest branch are dependent on the width and length of the composition. The exquisite grace by which we are charmed, the force we feel, the strength of construction which they bring before us, the splendid poetry which stirs our souls with admiration, proceed from this exactitude. We truly seem, in the contemplation of these pictures, to scent the odour of the earth, and to feel the lightest breath from heaven. The breeze from the sea brings to one's ears the sonority of the wide waves, or the softly murmured sound of ripples on the beaches of creeks and gulfs of silver and blue. We see appear successively the banks of the bay of Tokyo at all seasons and all hours: her fields joyous with the gaiety of the harvest; the same fields, sad and desolate, with naked trees under the cold gray sky of winter; on frosty days irradiated by the sun into the shimmering splendour of a dust of diamonds; in fogs, thick and heavy, where the vapour expands in waves



HOKUSAI. — VIEW OF MOUNT FUSIYAMA.

which are visible and veritably moving. In the blossoming trees upon the banks of the stream one finds a beauty truly Japanesque. His breaking up of the ice in the stream, where, driven by the current, it is piled up against its banks in quaint and dismal forms, is at once tender and tragic.

But, above all else, he was the painter of the Fusiyama, the sacred mountain "of which all poets and women of the island dream." It appears in nine out of ten of all his landscape compositions. No matter what his theme, the snow-covered summit of Fuji appears somewhere in the distance. He has shown it to us at all the different hours of the day, through the seasons and the ever-changing phenomena of light. We see it reveal its rough outlines in a cloudless sky, through the meshes of a netted sail, in the rays of the setting sun, in rain and snow storms, through reedy shores where the wild geese cackle, and as a ghostly silhouette against the nocturnal sky. Monet's "Rouen cathedrals" and "Haystacks" are merely child's play in comparison to these profound studies.

A Japanese writer has described his versatility in the following charming manner:

"I rose from my seat at the window, where I had idled the whole day long — softly, softly. Then I was up and away. I saw the countless green leaves tremble in the densely embowered tops of the trees; I watched the flaky clouds in the blue sky, collecting fantastically into shapes torn and multiform. I sauntered here and there, carelessly, without aim or volition. Now I crossed the Bridge of Apes and loitered as the echo repeated the cry of wild cranes. Now I was in the cherry grove of Owari. Through the mists, shifting across the coast of Miho, I descried the famous ponies of Suminoye.

Now I stood trembling upon the bridge of Kameji and looked down in astonishment at the gigantic Fuki plants. The roar of the dizzy waterfall of Ono resounded in my ear. A shudder ran through me. It was only a dream which I dreamed, lying in bed near my window, with this book of pictures by the master as a cushion beneath my head."

It is always the same thought that guides Hokusai through these multiplied aspects of nature. He seizes upon the characteristics of a field, of a bit of the ocean, of a rock, a tree, a flower or figure, in its most individual expression, in its passing charm of motion and harmony of colour. Study these kakemonos, colour prints, and sketch-books, in the order of their dates, and you will each time see that the painter's methods improve, that his sensibility to the mysteries of nature becomes more developed, that his eye discovers new and unknown forms and effects; but you do not feel from his work any hesitation in his art, any uncertainty of a mind seduced yesterday by one ideal, and to-day troubled by another. His step is always in advance, in the same direction, firm, resolute, and unwavering; one might say that he was urged forward by some irresistible force of nature, so regular and powerful is the impulse which carries him along.

Ever since the day when Hokusai took up the brush for the first time, he felt, even when he was not yet perfectly sure of himself, what he wanted to do, and he did it by processes of his own, travelling along a straight path toward conquest, without deviating an instant from his route, and without losing himself in pursuit of vague ideals or confused aspirations. Endowed with a robust moral nature and a healthy intellect, fortified by a life of constant intimacy with nature, there was in him no trace of that contemporary malady so fatal to artistic production and development, restlessness. The contentions of opposing schools and the caprices of æstheticism made no impression upon his mind of bronze, vibrantly nervous, and delicately impressionable to all emotions as it was. He was all of one piece in the subtle and complicated mechanism of his genius, admirably constituted to receive the most different sensations, to create the most opposite forms.

He was the contemporary of some mighty names, yet there scarcely was to be found among them all a spirit more thoroughly original; and surely, when the petty conflicts of passing taste are laid at rest for ever, it will be found that this man has written his signature, indelibly, on one of the principal pages of the universal history of art.

CHAPTER V.

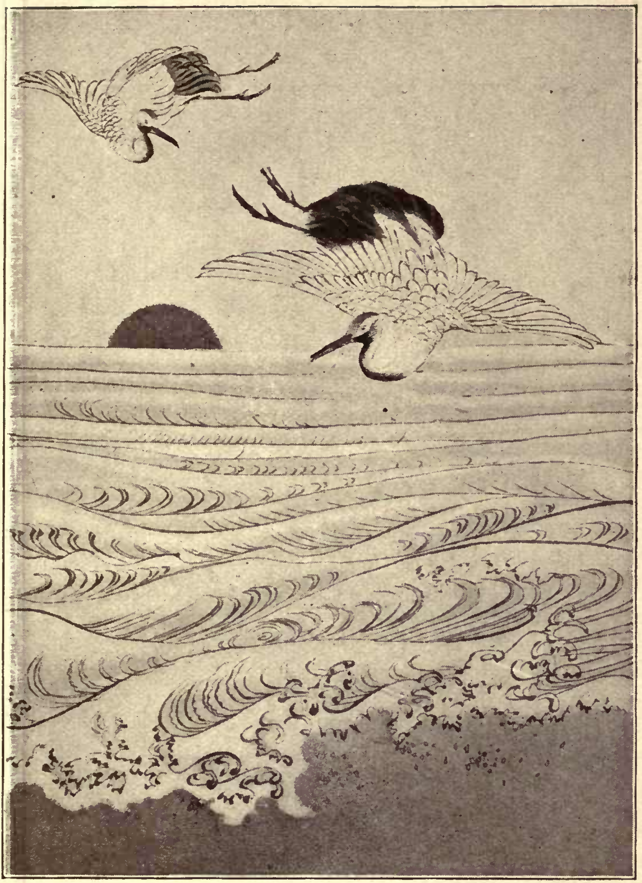
THE INFLUENCE OF JAPANESE ART ON WESTERN CIVILIZATION

THIRTY to forty years ago Japanese art was almost unknown to the Western world. Previous to the London International Exhibition of 1862, the Land of the Rising Sun was absolutely unrepresented in the European museums and art galleries. Only at The Hague there was a small collection of natural and industrial products, which, however, afforded but little information.

The first appreciator of Japanese art was probably Louis XIV. In his old age, he is said to have taken a fancy to "idols, pagodas, and stuffs painted with flowers," that came to the court of Versailles from the Far East, in chests of cedarwood. They probably reached Trianon, as they did the Dresden court, via Maceo.

The Portugese missionaries in the sixteenth century, and a century later the Dutch merchants allowed to occupy a factory at Nagasaki, were in the habit of shipping a few articles for Europe, chiefly lacquer cabinets and dinner sets made to order after European models. They were exhibited and sold in shops and bazaars, and can still occasionally be met with in old country houses and curiosity shops in England, Holland, France, and Spain. The workmanship of these articles, mostly Hitzen ware, painted in blue, red, or blue and gold, was exceedingly rough, and as unlike the superior native work as can be well imagined. The Portuguese missionaries do not seem to have formed any idea of the artistic originality of the "barbarians" whom they had come to convert; and the Dutch merchants never knew, save in a very imperfect manner, Japanese art properly so called. Up to the latter half of the nineteenth century, the majority of the Western public remained in ignorance of the fact that there was in Nippon a national art quite independent of Chinese art — an art having, as that of Greece, of Italy or of the Netherlands, its history, its schools, its monuments and masterpieces, and great masters.

The London exposition of 1862, with its "Japanese court," opened up this sealed book to the Western world. It came as a surprise; one had not expected such exquisite workmanship, and importers and scholars at once set out to explore the unknown realms of Eastern industry. The London display was followed by



Sketches of Cranes for Decorative Work.

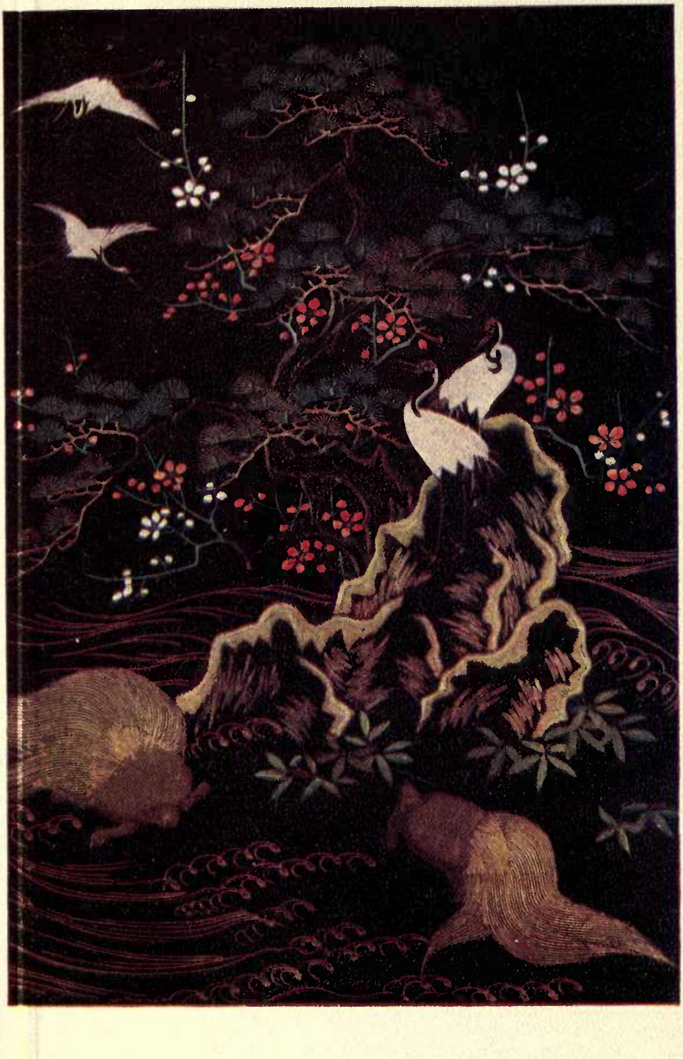
the exhibits which Prince Satsuma sent to the Paris Exposition of 1867. A few years later the magnificent collection of bronzes, wood-carvings and pottery, formed by M. H. Cernuschi during his travels in Japan, China, Java, Ceylon and India, created a sensation, and the art treasures of Japan were pronounced the most perfect.

They were regarded as a new revelation in the decorative arts. A number of able writers and energetic scholars — America, England, France, and Germany seemed suddenly to compete in turning out Japonists — began to make special studies of one or the other branch of art, often devoting their whole lifetime to the investigation. The Japanese government contributed matchless collections, carefully selected on a large scale, to the Vienna Weltausstellung of 1875, and the whole nation, seized with a fever for European material accomplishments, yielded up its ancient treasures with a readiness which was afterward repented of.

The occasion was a rare one, and the London importers, as those of every Continental capital, did not fail to profit by it. Everywhere Japanese silks, embroideries, bronzes, art pottery, lacquer, and carved wood and ivory, were displayed in the shop windows. Large consignments of Japanese goods arrived almost monthly in the various European ports; large special sales were the order of the day. In twenty years these "promoters" almost drained Japan, taking away all they could lay their hands upon, and sending the treasures pell-mell to Paris, to Hamburg, to London, or to New York.

Everybody seemed surprised at the variety and richness of these "novelties;" even the faults in perspective and modelling enchanted the enthusiasts, as a pro-

Silk Embroidery for a Screen



test against the too rigid rules exacted in Western art. A perfect furor for everything Japanese swept over European countries; Paris in particular went mad with Japomania. There was hardly a house in the Monceau Park district, which had not furnished some rooms with Japanese lacquer-work, bronzes, and tapestries.

Edmond and Jules de Goncourt became its champions, Zola invested thousands of francs in Japanese curios. And among the artists who appeared at the sales, one encountered celebrities like Alfred Stevens, Diaz, Fortuny, James Tissot, Alphonse Legros, Whistler, Carolus Duran, and the engravers Bracquemont and Jules Jacquemart.

The artists realized that this nation of the Far East had a complete and connected artistic development, that, at certain periods of its history, it had produced works in which none of the elements of great art were lacking, and that in certain respects Japanese art was even superior to their own.

European artists have equalled the Japanese in clever grouping, vigorous action, force of expression, passion for form and colour, and even in sketchy figure delineation without the appliance of shadows, but they have never reached that unlimited suggestiveness which even the most insignificant Japanese picture-book contains. This suggestiveness had conquered modern art.

It came at the right time. Too much philosophy had been written in Europe; everything, from the most commonplace to the most sublime, had been collected, catalogued, commented upon, raked up merely for the sake of raking up barren knowledge. It now became necessary to remove the dust and cobwebs that had settled on it, and infuse new life by purifying, remodelling and developing that heap of knowledge. And what could accomplish this better than Japanese art? Its influence was everywhere felt. It called forth, for instance, the short story literature, in which Andersen, Turgenjew, Verga, and the modern French and Scandinavian writers are masters, — a tendency toward brevity and conciseness of expression, which suggests a good deal more than it actually tells. Its law of repetition with slight variation, we can trace in Poe's poems, the work of the French symbolists, and, above all else, in the writings of Maurice Maeterlinck, that quaint combination of Greek, mediæval, and Japanese art reminiscences.

Its influence is also palpable in the descriptive music of to-day, in the composition of the Neo-Wagnerian school, which prefers tonal impressions to theoretic development, and does away with the finished forms of classic masters, with conscientious treatment of counterpoint, graceful codas dying away in clear sounds, or pedal notes with correct harmony. The younger composers, affecting grotesqueness, which is natural to the Japanese, endeavour to surprise their listeners by introducing a dissonant interval when a consonant interval is most expected, or breaking a phrase which is supposed to end in an easily eligible cadence, in the midst of a bar. Polyphony calls attention to four or five different sides at once, an impression such as one received looking at a Japanese colour print, in which half a dozen different colours strike the retina simultaneously.

The Japanese influence is naturally most evident in painting; in the nocturnes of Whistler; in Manet's ambition to see things flat; in the peculiar space composition of Degas, Skarbina, the German secessionists, and the poster painters; in the parallelism of vertical lines as practised by Puvis de Chavannes, and the parallelism of horizontal lines in D. W. Tryon's landscapes; in the frugal Kano-school-like colouring of Steinlen's Gil Blas illustrations, which have caused a revolution in modern illustration; in the disregard for symmetrical composition of the impressionists; in the eccentric drawing of the symbolists; and in the serial treatment of one phase of nature, as practised by Monet.

Nearly two-thirds of all painters who have become prominent during the last twenty years have learnt, in one instance or another, from the Japanese.

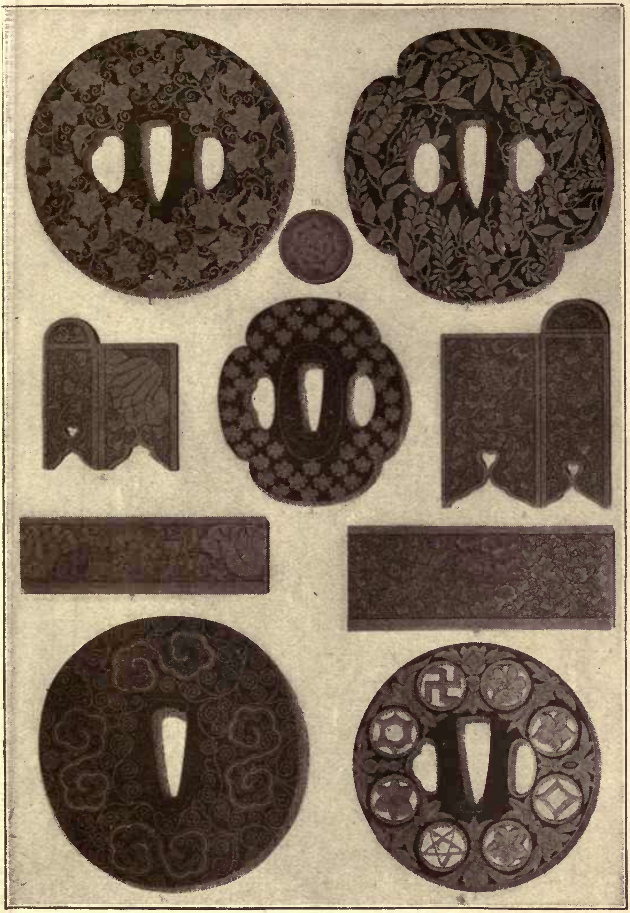
It is a strange coincidence that modern painting, just after succeeding in freeing itself from the fetters of classicism that had barred its development for so many decades, should embrace, scarcely having reached maturity and self-reliance, the sirenic charms of Japanese art. In the landscapes of Hiroshige and Hokusai the artists discovered not only a new and natural choice of subjects, but also a new and natural treatment. They learnt to understand the modesty of nature and to dare to represent it with the simplest means. For the first time, they noted the values of space, the grace and force of silhouette, the effectiveness of unframed composition, and the beauty of fugitive impressions, which impressionism taught at the same time, by a scientific application of unmixed colours.

I am also convinced that the pre-Raphaelites have borrowed their method of perspective, which makes all landscapes look as if they had been painted from an elevation — the mountains towering up behind one another — and teaches them to avoid difficulties by the introduction of clouds in all sorts of incongruous places, from the Japanese. (Some of Kiyonaga's compositions have a strange resemblance to those of Strudwick, Deverell, Burne-Jones, just as Takehasa Shunchosai seems to have been a forerunner of the Tachists.)

Some critics will no doubt shake their heads at this, and refer to my statement that Japanese art was not known in Europe when the pre-Raphaelites began their work; true enough, it was not as popular as it is now, but a few rare pieces had found their way to England, and, falling into the hands of these dreamy painters, undoubtedly had impressed them deeply, a good deal more than they would do now, when Japanese bric-à-brac can be found in every house.

Even the variety stage has profited by the Japanese movement. I realized it when I saw the Barrison sisters. They were an object-lesson that might have interested any student of art. There were five pretty, gay ladies of fascinating leanness and awkwardness à la Chavannes, who could neither sing nor dance, but were simply drilled by a manager to expounding in coquettish movements and attitudes a French-Japanese code of frivolity, and who thus unconsciously expressed the Japanese principle of repetition with slight variation. But as no other American critic, not even J. G. Huneker, has dwelt upon their æsthetic value in this respect, I may after all have been mistaken in my judgment.

Indisputable, however, is the influence of Japanese pictorialism on our interior decoration. The most striking feature of all Japanese interiors, to the average foreigner, is the total absence of furniture. Neither tables, chairs, beds, nor wash-



BRONZE SWORD-GUARDS AND CORNER-PIECES.

stands appear; the reason being that the first two are scarcely ever used, that the *futan* or bed consists of a thick, soft, quilt which is always rolled up and stored away in a cupboard during the day, while the wash-stand is almost superfluous in a country where the commonest labourer often takes five baths a day, and would die of shame if he bathed less than three times daily. Ewers, it is true, are used for the hands, but, like the bed and all other furniture, are concealed in cupboards, so that the general appearance of a Japanese room is somewhat bare.

The Japanese, who hide every nail in the woodwork of their houses under bronze shields of the most exquisite workmanship, have also taught us simplicity in domestic surroundings.

They have shown us that a room need not be as overcrowded as a museum in order to make an artistic impression;

that true elegance lies in simplicity, and that a wall fitted out in green or gray burlap, with a few etchings or photographs, after Botticelli, or other old masters, is beautiful and more dignified than yards of imitation gobelins, or repoussé leather tapestry, hung from ceiling to floor with paintings in heavy golden frames.

We have outgrown the beauty of Rogers statuettes, and tired of seeing Romney backgrounds in our portraits and photographs.

The elaborate patterns of Morris have given way to wall-paper of one uniform colour, and modern furniture is slowly freeing itself from the influence of former historic periods, and trying to evolve into a style of its own, based on lines which nature dictates. Whistler and Alexander have taught the same lesson in the background of portraits. Everywhere in their pictures we encounter the thin black line of the oblong frame, which plays such an important part in the interior decoration of to-day, and which, like the kakemono, invariably conveys a delightful division of space.

A lady artist, interested in interior decoration, remarked to me one day, in a most nonchalant manner:

"I think it is entirely wrong to decorate the walls of a public building with human figures. It might be done like the Alhambra; that is one way. And my studio — that is another," and she made a sweeping gesture about her.

I gazed about the studio in silent wonder as to what my hostess meant. There were four bare walls, stained with an agreeable quieting greenish gray, a couch in black and gold, a tasteful screen, a few ornate chairs, nothing else.

"Why, that's the Japanese style of furnishing a room—to leave it empty!" I thought; "everybody can do that." For I was aware that an artist friend of mine had selected the colour for the staining of various studios in the building, and that I, at the very time, could have taken a studio next door which, if I had applied the elegance and suggestiveness of emptiness, would have looked exactly like hers, and made me also an expert in mural and interior decoration. It is not quite as easy as all that, however. It was this lady's merit, and one that cannot be underrated, to know enough to leave the walls bare and not to overcrowd the room with unnecessary furniture and bric-à-brac.

Such simplicity is dignified and beautiful, and yet an empty room can hardly be considered a work of art if not accompanied by a luxury of refinement in the smallest details.

Experiments of this sort are valuable in helping the cause, however. Her studio has been a lesson to me; it has shown me how easily the Japanese style of furnishing a house could be Americanized, and I have watched with pleasure how good taste in that direction is rapidly spreading. In this particular respect, the innovation has done a vast deal of good.

Less fortunate is its influence on Western art. If it were simply the endeavour of our artists, by means of careful research and comparison, to grasp the fundamental laws of Japanese art, no criticism could be made. But artists apparently care for nothing less than a critical knowledge of both Eastern and Western art. They are satisfied with imitating surface qualities. It is true that these qualities are extremely interesting, that they have helped to make our modern art extremely interesting. But very little is gained thereby.

I prefer, at any time, an Okyo marine to Whistler's "The Ocean," or a Hiroshige bridge scene to the "Fragment of Old Battersea Bridge," by the same painter. They are perfect translations, but, after all, mere translations. And Whistler's yellow buskin ladies, which have something of the true spirit of the "living tradition" of Japanese art, are to be preferred at any time.

The sooner our painters get rid of the Japanese craze, the better for them, and they would get rid of it if they would study Japanese art a little more conscientiously, and under the surface.

In the same way as it takes a foreigner years of study and close communion with Eastern life to understand the symbolism of the *No* dances, it would be necessary for one who wishes to become an expert on Japanese painting, to devote an equally long time to the study of their laws of construction, which are as rigid and irrefutable as those of Greek art.

And for such reasons, we can derive little more than an æsthetic enjoyment from an occasional contemplation of Japanese art. As to the adopting of their style as the ideal of our Western art, it seems to me hopelessly illogical; only a talented native, who sees things as the Japanese see them, and to whom the suggestive touch has almost become a racial trait, could still create something original along those lines. A foreigner, no matter how catholic his mind and how dexterous his hand, could never surpass the valueless production of an excellent imitation. He might enrich his own style by borrowing certain qualities, but he will waste his faculties in trying to adopt it, for adoption is utterly impossible.

CHAPTER VI.

JAPANESE ARCHITECTURE AND SCULPTURE

ON opening a book on the history of architecture, in nine out of ten cases one will not find more than three or four pages dealing with the land of chrysanthemums.

In certain branches of knowledge, it is apparently still the fashion for one half of the world to ignore absolutely the existence of the other half.

And yet Japanese architecture affords such a vast field for interesting study and analysis. It is the only timber architecture that has risen to a monumental and artistic importance. Its architectural language is wider in its range, more complex and varied than that of Norway and Switzerland, and, in regard to seemliness and grace, more adequately equipped than that of any nation in the Far East. The Japanese style seems to have originated without any painful effort. It was a natural growth, so individual and powerful that it could utilize, with impunity, angles, curves, and projections which elsewhere might have appeared awkward and hideous, and even be successful in making them beautiful.

Japanese architecture, however, must be contemplated rather from the painter's or landscape-gardener's standpoint than from the architect's point of view. It is essentially impressionistic, and its power lies more in colour effects than in form or outline.

To gaze at a temple at night, silhouetting its grotesque shape against the starry sky, weirdly dreamlike, strangely illuminated by rows of paper lanterns hung all along its curving eaves, is a sight never to be forgotten.

A temple is never designed as an isolated object, but always as a feature of the surrounding landscape, and thus it appears more like great splashes of crimson, lacquer, and gold down a mountainside than a symmetrical distribution of columns, windows, and wall spaces. Notwithstanding this picturesqueness of conception, however, which utilizes the whole landscape as a canvas, and appeals purely to our visual apprehension, it is in detail that the Japanese architect most excels, for if he conceives like a giant, he invariably finishes like a jeweller. Every detail, to the very nails, which are not dull surfaces, but rendered exquisite ornaments, is a work of art. Everywhere we encounter friezes and carvings in relief, representing in quaint colour harmonies, flowers and birds, or heavenly spirits, playing upon flutes and stringed instruments. The pavement is executed in coloured slabs, and the pillars are gilded from top to bottom. Even the stairs of some temples are fashioned of gold lacquer. Gold is the neutral colour of Japanese decoration.

Some of the temple interiors are like visions of the Thousand and One Nights. Imagine a sanctuary where the ceiling is as magnificent as painting, sculpture, lacquer, and precious metals can make it, representing a dark blue sea in which golden dragons are sporting, pierced at intervals, by gorgeous columns, gold-lacquered and capped with embossed bronze, and where walls and ceiling are reflected, as in a forest pool, in the black floor of polished lacquer.

Nearly every building, large or small, is built of wood. As the islands are exposed to almost incessant shocks from earthquakes, it has proved the most durable of materials, and, as in Tyrol, the Bernese Oberland, and the mountainous districts of Norway, no brick or stone is introduced except as foundation. This, however, did not hinder the Eastern architects from grappling with the gravest mechanical difficulties in structures even of stupendous size.

Colossal structures are common enough in Japan. The porch of the great temple of Todaji rests on pillars one hundred feet in height by twelve feet in circumference; and this porch simply furnishes access to another porch of equal size, behind which stands the temple itself, of whose size we may form some idea from the fact, that within it contains a colossal image of the Buddha, fifty-three feet in height, with a nimbus surrounding the head eighty-three feet in diameter. Not less vast are the proportions of the great sanctuary at Nara, where each column, a hundred feet in height, consists of a single stem. It is astonishing to learn that these structures, vast in size and splendid in the decoration of every part of their bay work, blazing with gold and colours, as gorgeous now after a lapse of a thousand years as they were at first, belong to an age compared to whose remoteness the European cathedrals must almost be called modern.

The Temple of Nara was nearly three centuries old when Edward the Confessor laid the foundation stone of his church of Westminster, and Harold reared the massive piers and arches of Waltham. Dr. Christopher Dresser, who wrote very interestingly and instructively on Japanese architecture, asked very appropriately: "What buildings can we show in England which have existed since the eighth century and are yet almost as perfect as when first built? and yet our buildings rest on a solid foundation, and not on earth which is constantly rocked by natural convulsion."

The ingenuity of European engineers and architects would probably be really at a loss in dealing with the problems involved in the erection and support of the magnificent pagoda of Nikko, and in guarding the lofty tower against the force of earthquakes. In this building Doctor Dresser noted with surprise an apparent waste of material. He did not understand why an enormous log of wood ascended in the centre of the structure from its base to the apex. This mass of timber, he tells us, is nearly two feet in diameter, and near the lower end a log equally large was bolted to each of the four sides of this central mass. His argument of the waste of material was met by the rejoinder that the walls must be strong enough to support the central block; and in his replying that the central block was not supported by the sides, he was led to the top, and there made to see that this huge central mass was suspended like the clapper of a bell. On descending to the bottom, and lying on the ground, he could see, further, that there was an inch of space intervening between the soil and this mighty pendulum, which goes far toward insuring the safety of the building during earthquakes.

For centuries, at least, this centre of gravity has, by its swinging, been kept within the base; and it would assuredly be impossible to adduce stronger evidence of scientific forethought and calculation on the part of architects in dealing with a problem of extreme difficulty.

Japanese buildings may be broadly divided into domestic dwellings, palaces, and ecclesiastical edifices.

Of these, domestic dwellings are the simplest, being derived directly from the hut of the Aino, and consist for the most part of vertical beams (resting upon stones) mortised to horizontal beams, and carrying a heavy roof, thatched, shingled, or tiled. They are really nothing more than roofs standing on a series of legs.

As a rule there are no permanent walls, the sides being composed in winter of *amado*, or wooden sliding screens, capable of being folded up and packed away, and in summer of *shoji*, or oiled paper slides, translucent, but not transparent. Thus, in warm weather, all the sides of the house may be removed and the whole thrown open to air and ventilation. Nor do permanent partitions cut up the interior; paper screens, sliding in grooves, divide the space according to the number of rooms required. A particular charm is lent to these delicate structures by leaving the woodwork, within as well as without, unpainted. This elegance and simplicity of trimming, revealing the exquisite grain of the camphor-tree, which resembles fine watered silk, wins the admiration of every stranger.

The palaces of the court nobles resemble the domestic dwellings in construction, save that they contain more permanent walls, and are usually surmounted by roofs of a more elaborate type. As regards decoration, they have borrowed from the resources of ecclesiastical architecture, and many beautiful forms of ornaments, such as adorn the temples, have found their way into the abodes of the nobility. Their residences were generally surrounded by extensive landscape gardens, such as Lafcadio Hearn has so lovingly described in his "Glimpses of Unfamiliar Japan."

The palaces of the Mikado are naturally the most elaborate structures of this kind. In primitive times his palace was said to be but little superior to that of the humblest villager — the emperor, being of divine origin, needed no earthly pomp to give him dignity in the eyes of his subjects. In later years the examples of luxurious living set by the Shoguns have had their effect, so that, at the present day, the Mikado's palaces are quite elaborate in extent and decoration.

In the old palaces the screens were painted or embroidered with exquisite copies of the old masters. The friezes are often gems of glyptic art, and occasionally, as in the Nijo palace, by the hand of Hidari Zingaro, while the ceilings are coffered in black lacquer with gold enrichments.

In the new palace at Tokyo, the sliding screens are of plate glass, a rather expensive luxury in a land so prone to earthquakes, and the furniture, having been manufactured in Germany, seems out of place in its Eastern home.

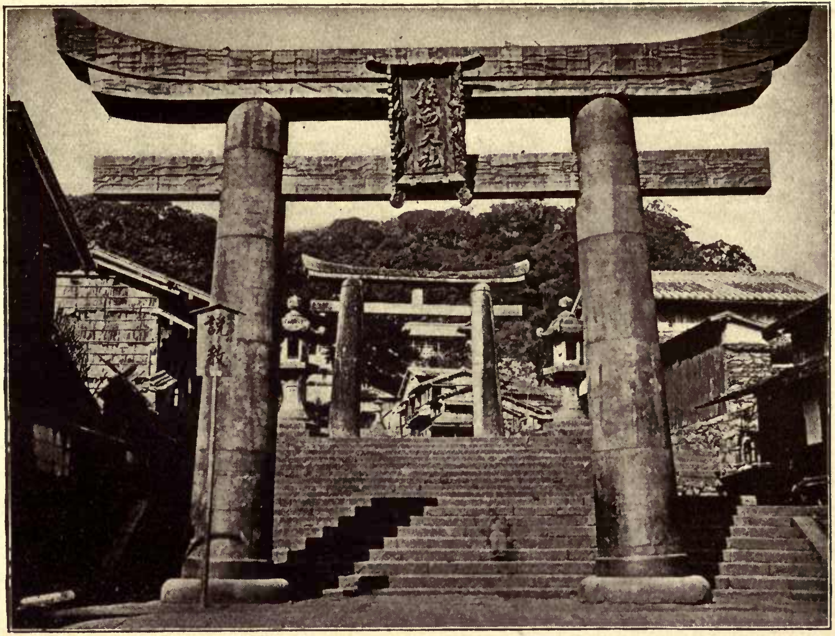
Some of the old feudal castles, several of which still exist in a state of perfect preservation, were proportioned in a way to reveal a certain grandeur and dignity of appearance. They are lofty, dignified wooden structures. Each story is placed a little within the one below, the projecting portion being roofed with tiles (a fashion of the eleventh century). The effect of height is increased by a stone embankment, which in mediæval times afforded sufficient protection against civil disturbances. The facing of these embankments is fashioned out of immense rocks, fitted without cement, and the corners have a parabolic curve outward, which lends an air of Norman solidity to the whole. Most of the castles now extant date from the sixteenth century, though some have been completed at a later date, such as the castle of Nagoya, built about 1610 by twenty feudal lords, and held to be the finest example of its kind in Japan.

Also the Yashiki, or "spread-out-houses," — the former homes of the territorial nobility, now fast disappearing, or turned into shops, — are rather picturesque constructions. They are said to have been an evolution from the military encampments of former days, in which the general's pavilion stood high among the other tents. The Yashiki was a collection of buildings, a square lined with barracks for the soldiery, while the residence of the daimyo, surrounded by spacious gardens, rose in the middle. The whole was girt by a broad, deep moat, and a mud-plastered wall, roofed with tiles and set high upon a stone embankment. The residence differed but little from the castles just described, but the barracks had a certain individuality of their own. They consist of long rows of two-story buildings, with projecting eaves, barred windows, hanging bays, tiled roofs, and stone foundations, frequently forming a part of the enclosing wall.

The roof is always the most artistic and characteristic feature of Japanese buildings. With its broad overhanging eaves, festooned in the centre and bent upward and backward at the corners, thereby disclosing a vision of complicated corbelling, it lends a peculiar, picturesque charm to any structure.

It is difficult to divide the ecclesiastical buildings conscientiously into distinct classes, as is generally done. The simple style of Shinto temples, developed from the primeval huts of the Ainos, and the most elaborate style of the Buddhist temples, an offshoot of Korean architecture, have constantly influenced and affected each other. The fusion of the Buddhist religion with the Shinto cult, which began in 552, when Buddhism was first introduced into the country, also amalgamated the architecture of Burma, to a certain extent, with the Japanese native style.

The purest specimens of Shinto temples are built of plain white pine, surmounted by thatched roofs. In them the coarse matting, forming the sides of the Aino hut, have given place to ordinary boarding, the earthen floor to a raised wooden one surrounded by a veranda, and the rough logs used anciently as weights upon the *munaosae* or "roof-presser" (a beam to hold the thatch in place) are represented by cigar-shaped pieces of timber neatly turned. At either end of the roof, the rafters project so as to form a letter X above the ridge-pole. This treatment always stamps a temple as belonging to the Shinto faith, a fact further



Torii.

emphasized by the presence of the *torii*, the Japanese form of propylæa, invariably standing before temple enclosures devoted to the Shinto cult. An amazing plainness 樸素 is the attribute of most Shinto shrines. There are no idols, and the wooden walls remain untouched by the painter's brush or the lacquerer's devices. Its sole ornaments 装飾 are the symbolical mirror, "the emblem 象徴 of the sun," transparent crystal globes, and "prayers," notched strips of paper hung upon wands.

Since 1868, when Shintoism was reinstalled as the state religion, a certain effort at enrichment has been essayed, but the shrines of Ize and Izumo still stand as the most complete examples of the original native style.

In the Buddhist temples, the marvellous instinct of the Japanese for grouping and colour has had full sway. The first building in a Buddhist shrine which asserts itself is the "Sammon," or two-storied gateway, resembling in the distribution of its upper story the "gates of extensive wisdom," etc., in the noble official residences of Korea. The framing of the *lower story*, however, is arranged so as to form niches, in which stand the God of Thunder and the Wind deity, the face of one being always painted a livid green, that of the other a deep vermilion, as though congested.

Passing through the *sammon* the visitor or worshipper finds himself in the first terraced court, only to encounter another gateway, more imposing than the last, leading to a second court, and so on to a third, until by traversing terrace after terrace he at last reaches the oratory and chapel. These courtyards are usually filled with all the concomitant buildings of the Buddhist cult, as well as with a number of bronze and stone lanterns presented by the daimyos in token of repentance for past sins. Belfries, priests' apartments, a *rinzo*, or revolving library, a kitchen, a treasure-house, a pavilion containing the holy water cistern, and pagodas rise on either hand throughout, all crowned with festooned roofs, beautifully carved and lacquered, embellished with statuary, and covered with ornaments in wood, bronze, and ivory, representing gods, dragons, birds, lions, tapers, unicorns, elephants, tigers, flowers, and plants, in fact, every symbol known to the Japanese, whether original, or borrowed from the Chinese or Koreans.

Among the most imposing of these supplementary buildings are the pagodas, which are invariably square, like those of Korea.

They are usually divided into five or seven stories, each set a little within the one below, and girt about with balconies and overhanging eaves as in China. The whole is usually lacquered in dull red, save the lowest story, on which a bewildering mass of painted carvings distracts the eye, and high above all a twisted spire of bronze forms the culmination.

One longs to know something of the life of the men who erected all of these large and magnificent structures. And yet we know little more than nothing. The temple archives are silent. The records of the birth and death of their great architects, nay, even their very names, are often wanting.

All I can still add is a chronological list as to when the principal buildings and temples were constructed. I am indebted to Louis Gonse, the French expert, for this valuable information.

Seventh century. The palace of Assakura at Siga, and the temple of Horiuyi at Nara.

Eighth century. The castle of Taga (of which the ruins are still existing) and the gateway and sanctuary of the Dai-Butsu temple at Nara.

Ninth century. The Gosho palace at Kyoto, and the temple of Obaku at Oyi.

Twelfth century. The temples and the pagoda of Kamakura.

Thirteenth century. The temple of Tokufudji at Kyoto.

Fifteenth century. The palace and pavilion of Kinkakudi at Kyoto, and a large number of other temples and palatial residences.

Sixteenth century. The castle of Osaka, the Himkahu palace, and the Shinto temple at Kyoto.

Seventeenth century. The great Shinto temple at Nikko and the Tchoin temple at Kyoto, both built by Hidari Zingaro, and the five-story pagodas of Nikko, Osaka, and Kyoto.

We possess but scant information regarding the origin of Japanese architecture. Authentic information begins with the reign of Jimmu Tenno, who ascended the throne in 660 B. C., and is believed to have been the first human ruler of Nippon, which had before that been governed by Shinto gods. During his reign an imperial palace and a Shinto temple were built, and these gave the mode until about 201 A. D., when the empress dowager Yingo Koto, the Semiramis or Catherine of the Far East, donned male attire and conquered Korea.

From that time on Korea became the inspiration of Japanese builders. The details of Korean architecture show much affinity with the Chinese, which, in turn, had been derived to a certain extent from Burma. In the period of 673–689, under the emperor Temmu, however, the importation ceased, and assimilation set in.

Architectural features which had entered the country uncompromisingly Chinese, Korean, or Indian in character, lost their original appearance, and being assimilated, took on a refinement and elegance quite new and individual. A steady advancement toward purity of style followed. Colour became one of the leading characteristics. Buildings were conceived as colour schemes, in emerald and silver, with a dash of crimson, or in yellowish gray and black, with a dark reddish bronze as accentuation. The love for highly finished detail was carried to the extreme, and the ornamentation, steadily increasing in picturesque effect, almost swallowed up the form.

This continued with slight modifications until 1616, when the climax was reached in the temple of Shiba, and the Tokugawa at Nikko, the masterpieces of the Japanese builder's art.

Such, in brief, is the architecture of Nippon. From the purely classic point of view, in which form and outline play so important a part, it may not rank very high in the scale; but in the eyes of the Oriental it meets all requirements.

The roofs are certainly as graceful in curve and sweep as any in the world, and, as regards picturesqueness, colour effects, and external enrichment, the temples of Shiba and Nikko stand preëminent throughout the East.

The modern railway stations, hotels, club-houses, and government buildings, erected since 1868, which affect an amalgamation of native and foreign ornaments and forms, are architecturally uninteresting. The land has lost its ancient architectural language, and foreign jargons have, temporarily at least, taken the place of the natural speech.

Sculpture, in our Western sense, is

Pagoda.

comparatively unknown in Japan. It never approaches the calm, stately perfection of Greek, or even Egyptian, art, except it were in the colossal statues of Buddha, and other colossal figures carved in wood, like the Deva Kings, the original horses and temple guardians at Nara. With the exception of the Dai-Butsu of Kamakura, which will be discussed later on, they are, to me, not even as imposing as the giant statues of camels and mandarins in the avenue leading to the sepulchre of Ming, near Peking.

The Daishi family in the eighth and ninth centuries were the authors of many of these Dai-Butsus. They were the real sculptors of Japan. In later centuries miniature carving became more and more the fashion.

Even for a native it is difficult to form an accurate estimate of those huge standing figures of gods and goddesses, of the seven deities of happiness and other symbolical and mythological characters. The majority of them are hidden in temples, in high and narrow sanctuaries, lighted only from a little entrance. The figures, often thirty feet high, loom, all golden, into the darkness, which is too great to judge of form, whether it be art or not. The only impression one receives, is a "smile of gold far above our head" in the obscurity of the roof.

Lafcadio Hearn describes one of those colossal golden images in his "Pilgrimage to Enoshima."

"I follow the old priest cautiously, discerning nothing whatever but the flicker of the lantern; then we halt before something which gleams. A moment, and my eyes, becoming more accustomed to the darkness, begin to distinguish outlines; the gleaming object defines itself gradually as a foot, an immense golden foot, and I perceive the hem of a golden robe undulating over the instep. Now the other foot appears; the figure is certainly standing. I can perceive that we are in a narrow, but very lofty, chamber, and that out of some mysterious blackness overhead, ropes are dangling down into the circle of lantern light, illuminating the golden feet. The priest lights two more lanterns, and suspends them upon hooks attached to a pair of pendent ropes about a yard apart. Then he pulls up both together slowly. More of the golden robe is revealed as the lanterns ascend, swinging on their way; then the outlines of two mighty knees; then the curving of columnar thighs under chiselled drapery, and, as with the still waving ascent of the lanterns, the golden vision towers ever higher through the gloom, expectation intensifies. There is no sound but the sound of the invisible pulleys overhead, which squeak like bats. Now above the golden circle the suggestion of a bosom. Then the gleaming of a golden hand uplifted in benediction. Then another golden hand holding a lotus. And at last a face, golden, smiling, with eternal youth and infinite tenderness, the face of Kwannon.

"Revealed thus out of the consecrated darkness, this ideal of divine femininity — creation of a forgotten art and time — is more than impressive. I can scarcely define the emotion which it produces as admiration; it is rather reverence. But the lanterns, which paused awhile at the level of the beautiful face, now ascend still higher. And lo! the tiara of divinity appears, with strangest symbolism. It is a pyramid of heads, of faces, — charming faces of maidens, — miniature faces of Kwannon herself."

To the student, Japanese sculpture

offers a striking and rather unexpected peculiarity. In all other branches of art the Japanese carefully avoids giving us an illusion of the materiality of things; in sculpture he makes it the main object. He not only colours his statues in a most lifelike manner (carved and painted wood is said to be the commencement of all artistic productions in Japan), but at times strives to give to them, as to waxwork, the actual appearance of reality, by introducing glass eyes, and real hair.

Very characteristic of Japanese sculpture in this respect are the images of foxes, many dating back to the tenth and eleventh century, in grayish green stone, which the modern tourist encounters so frequently before Shinto shrines and in the cemeteries. The fox was worshipped as the deity of rice, and has always been a favourite subject with the artists. The stone carving is very primitive, but the form of the animals of a rare elegance, as graceful as that of greyhounds. They have eyes of green or gray crystal quartz, and are mostly covered with the moss of centuries. They create a strange impression of mythological conceptions; they have something ghostly about them; and each image has an individuality of its own. Some of them laugh ironically, or slyly wink their eyes; others watch with cocked-up ears; while others again sleep with their mouths agape.

The skill of the Chinese painter in faithfully reproducing the plumage of birds, the wings of butterflies, the marking of shells, has never appealed to the Japanese painter. Why it should have inspired the sculptor is one of those curious problems which the art critic has to solve.

In looking at a statue the optical consciousness cannot readily be divided. Either it attracts to form or it attracts to hue, rarely and imperfectly to both together. And sculpture should appeal to form, as revealed by flowing lines and delicate modelling. The Japanese, always deficient in his appreciation of light and shade, apparently had no sense for the statuesque; to him form is merely a curved surface, void of every emotional feeling. He introduces colour to distract attention from the monotony of form, and, unconsciously, paints a painting in relief.

Form alone is no ideal to him. Even in his okimonos, *i. e.*, ivory statuettes, it is subordinated to the idea. He does not share our opinion that the body is most beautiful when naked. He considers a female figure in holiday attire more lovely than without drapery.

This is exactly the reason why sculpture has remained in its incipiency. The Land of the Rising Sun has produced no Donatello or Luca della Robbia.

Hidari Zingaro (seventeenth century), it is true, was a highly interesting combination of architect, carpenter, and woodcarver, and his friezes of carved flowers and birds are unsurpassed in delicacy of execution. He was an architectural sculptor in the true sense of the word.

Also the works in hammered bronze of his contemporary, Hiroshima, whose colossal "sleeping cat" is even to this day known to every child, I rank very high artistically, but I would not take it upon myself to call him a sculptor, any more than I would apply the term to the silver and goldsmiths of the middle ages.

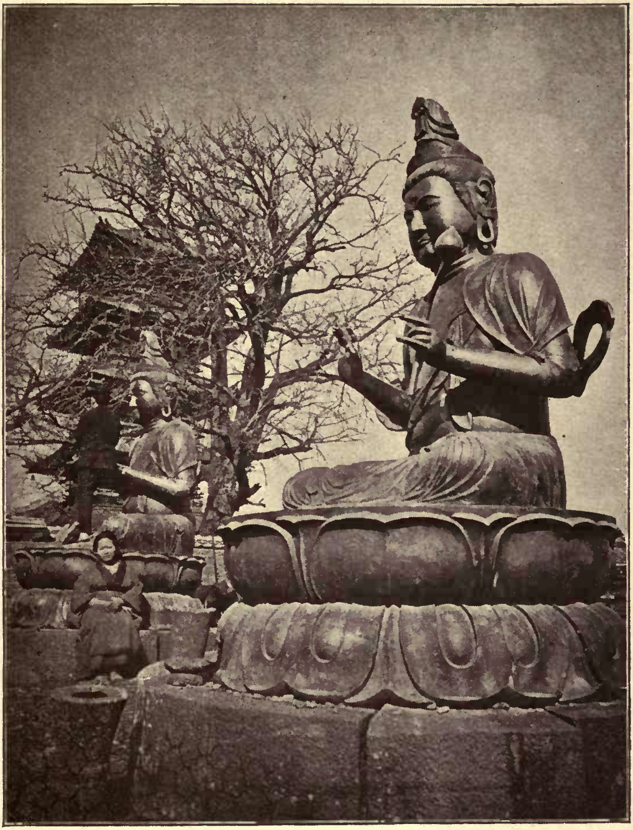
I gladly acknowledge that Seimen has made vases and incense-burners which no American would ever dream of. Yet I would not dare compare the turtles of Seimen, the quails of Kamejo, the birds of Chokichi and the dragons of Taoun (four great metal-workers of the eighteenth century) to Cellini's work, unfit as they were for jewelry.

It is different with Ogawa Ritsuo (seventeenth century), a samurai, who, after distinguishing himself as a soldier, renounced the career of arms to become an art workman, equally successful in statuettes and lacquer work.

He carved in wood *en miniature*, but all his work had the effect of bigness, of the strength and grandeur of the antique models of the eleventh century that influenced him. His portrait statues are lifelike, full of dignity and grace, revealing a careful and fairly truthful study of drapery. His strange and fantastic types, like the Shoki, the legendary persecutor of the daimyos, manifest a wonderful vigour and spontaneity of expression. The outlines are always exaggerated, but the modelling is very skilful and almost accurate. He never preserved the original colour of wood, but invariably coloured face and drapery; the latter generally brown, with a few delicate touches of gold.

But even Ritsuo is not a sculptor as we understand the word. According to Western æsthetics a piece of sculpture must be "statuesque." It must be a vigorous self-abnegation of all unnecessary embellishment. Japanese sculpture is almost always ornamental and picturesque. (Who but a Japanese would think of *carving* a moonlit scene?)

Somewhere the dividing line must be drawn, and I think I am justified in doing as I have done. A sleeping cat necessarily does not rank as high, as a work of art, as an Apollo of Belvedere. And it is very annoying to hear the statement that the Japanese have another standard of art than ours continually repeated. Of course, they have another standard of



DAI-BUTSU, ASAKASA.

art, and their work is, in a certain way, just as great as ours. Many of their okimonos and netsukés, as the various little ivory ornaments are called, replete with life and humour, reveal more true art than the "ambitious" work of our average sculptors. But this is not a discussion about merit, but merely about terms. Both Donatello as well as Hiroshima are great artists, the only difference being that Donatello is a sculptor and Hiroshima an artisan.

Let us now return to those giant statues, who, seated on lotus flowers, with a serene smile frozen on their lips, contemplate the vanity of all discussions, of all human endeavours and aspirations, of existence itself.

The most famous one is at Kamakura, completed in 1252. Others can be found at Nara, Asakasa, and other places. The height of the Kamakura idol is forty-nine feet seven inches, circumference ninety-seven feet, length of face eight feet five inches, width of mouth three feet two inches, and there are said to be eight hundred and thirty curls upon the head, each of which is nine inches long.

It is made of sheets of upright layers of bronze, brazed together and finished with file work. They are, of course, hollow, and a ladder enables the pilgrim to ascend into the interior of the colossus, as high as the shoulders, in which, generally, two little windows command a wide prospect of the surrounding grounds.

The Dai-Butsu of Nara is higher than that of Kamakura, and totally dissimilar to the most of the other ones. The black face, with its distended nostrils and puffed cheeks, suggests rather an African cast of countenance; but this may be owing to departures from the original model while undergoing repairs, for we are told that between the year 750, when the image was first completed, and 1570, the head was three times burnt off and fell to the ground. While the Kamakura figure shows both hands resting upon the knees, that of Nara has the right arm extended upward, with the palm of the hand to the front.

On the right and left of the Dai-Butsu are images nearly eighteen feet high, built in modern times, and placed in their present positions, doubtless, with the shrewd idea that their known height, yet diminutive appearance in contrast with the central figure, would lend enormity to the main attraction.

Although most of the Dai-Butsus are centuries old, there are also some of more recent date, notably the Dai-Butsu of Kyoto, built by Hideyary in 1800. It is constructed entirely of wood, and nearly sixty feet high. As a carving it is mammoth, but the pleasant smile of the Kamakura idol is missing, and as a work of art it is not to be compared with the older ones.

The Dai-Butsus are a great attraction to the tourists. Every traveller who can wield the pen has written his appreciation about them, particularly of the wonderful giant figure of Kamakura.

Chamberlain says:

"No other gives such an impression of majesty, or so truly symbolizes the central idea of Buddhism, the intellectual calm which comes of perfected knowledge and the subjugation of all passion."

William Elliot Griffis, one of our foremost authorities on Japanese art, described the statue with the following enthusiastic words:

"One could scarcely imagine a purer interpretation of the calm repose of Nirvana than that of the work of the metallurgist, Ono. Cast six centuries ago, and surviving the destruction by tidal waves of the massive temples reared to enclose it, the figure stands out under the blue canopy of the sky, in sunshine and cloud, at dawn-light and even-glow, sublime in conception and superb in achievement."

Lafcadio Hearn, who is at times a poet as much as he is an authority, has given us a charming account of the Kamakura idol, which deserves to be quoted in full:

"You do not see the Dai-Butsu as you enter the grounds of the long vanished temple, and proceed along a paved path across stretches of lawn; great trees hide him. But very suddenly, at a turn, he comes into full view, and you start! No matter how many photographs of the colossus you may have already seen, this first vision of the reality is an astonishment. Then you imagine that you are already too near, though the image is at least one hundred yards away. As for me, I retire at once thirty or forty yards back to get a better view, and the jinrikisha man runs after me, laughing and gesticulating, thinking that I imagine the image alive, and am afraid of it.

" But even were the shape alive none could be afraid of it. The gentleness, the dreamy passionlessness of these features — the immense repose of the whole figure — are full of beauty and charm. And, contrary to all expectation, the nearer you approach the giant Buddha, the greater the charm becomes. You look up into the solemnly beautiful face, — into the half closed eyes, that seem to watch you through their eyelids of bronze as gently as those of a child; and you feel that the image typifies all that is tender and solemn in the soul of the East. Yet, you feel also that only Japanese thought could have created it. Its beauty, its dignity, its perfect repose, reflect the higher life of the race that imagined it, and, though inspired doubtless by some Indian model, as the treatment of his hair and various symbolic marks reveal, the art is Japanese.

"So mighty and beautiful is the work that you will for some time fail to notice the magnificent lotus plants of bronze, fully fifteen feet high, planted before the figure on another side of the great tripod in which incense rods are burning."

The Dai-Butsu of Kamakura is to me an embodiment of Old Japan, of all that is noble and elevating in that most artistic of all races.

Creeds may pass and reappear, and the race itself which created them may vanish; but the Dai-Butsu will never cease to smile the smile which has been upon his lips for six hundred years. How peaceful life seems at the feet of the great tranquil figure; what happiness it must be to feel oneself enfranchised, to be no longer conscious of the flight of life, of the incessant fall into the sad past, where all beloved objects end, to conquer time as he has done, whom six centuries have left untouched.

Ah, ye ancient ascetics, gentle dreamers, who sought, in fashioning these idols centuries ago, to weave a rainbow-coloured veil over dark reality; who renounced all personal desire, to shelter yourselves like your creations in indifference and immobility; with what a smile of disdainful pity would you regard the Western race, which now introduces the accomplishments of modern civilization into your land. They do not believe that the world is a dream, these materialists. They rejoice in their strength, and their will obtains gratification. They act, they build upon the world which they believe to be of rock, and you believe is shifting sand. What would you say of these ships, loaded with the world's goods, of these trains which devour the distance, as if it were of any consequence to change one's place to another? But, above all, what would you say of the meagre philosophy which vegetates in yonder clime, where nature is less bountiful than in your isles of flowers?

This, at least, is certain. You would make no attempt to enlighten them. You would leave them to their busy goings and comings, to their pride of action; and, slowly, with half-closed eyes, you would return with delight to your solitary dreams, to your tranquillizing contemplation of the eternal and motionless.

CHAPTER VII.

THE ORNAMENTAL ARTS

POTTERY AND PORCELAIN — METALS AND BRONZES — LACQUER WARE

IN the libraries of some collectors of Japanese curios, one can find an old edition of the "Bampo Sen Shio" — "complete collection of ten thousand jewels," a book of fourteen volumes, printed under the care of one Aboshi in 1698. It is a priceless possession, as, aside from its bibliographical interests, it falls nothing short of being an exhaustive *résumé* of the Japanese industrial arts.

There are signatures and seals of celebrated painters; of kakemonos, Chinese or Japanese; minute descriptions of curious and ancient coins; of blades of illustrious *katanas*, of iron kettles, incense vessels, flower vases, lacquers and fabrics; biographical data of celebrated potters, Chinese, Korean, or native; of the Gotos, celebrated artificers in the ornamentation of sabres, etc. Two entire volumes are devoted to vases of Japanese earth, designs of teapots, old and new cups, and Chinese vessels of the *Temmoku* epoch.

The information is accompanied by sketches, the prices are indicated in gold-leaf, the dimensions of each object are given, as well as the colour and the thickness of the enamels. It is a remarkable book, written for a public consisting of princes and millionaire collectors. To the layman it is bewildering; only gradually, and after many days of study, he will master its contents, and learn to understand and appreciate the decorative charms of Japanese art. He will realize that one of the principal merits of Japanese art lies in its purely decorative and ideal industrial qualities, that they present something we Westerners do not possess, do not even understand. At certain periods in the Gothic and Rococo we touched it, but it never belonged to the whole people, as in Japan. The Japanese have realized, as far as it is possible, Walt Whitman's dream of a democratic art, for only an industrial art can be democratic.

If we understood Japanese art, we would endeavour to live in different houses, eat from different dishes, sleep in different beds, change our entire surroundings, and discard our present costume.

In order to exemplify the difference, let me cite two instances: We all know what clumsy things our alarm-clocks are; the same alarm-clock, for the same price, is now fabricated in Japan, but is made to represent a frog holding the time-table. Then again, what do our wives' and sisters' pin-cushions generally look like: merely little square cushions, whereas in Japan they take the form of a beautiful flower, or a fruit, or a fish. And so everything, from their buttons, baskets, kitchen utensils, to their hand-made embroideries, their plates of Ninsei, and their Kenzan and Ritsuo lacquer trays, is a thing of beauty.

I must confess that I could look at any ancient vase of Arita porcelain for a longer time, and with more pleasure, than at the majority of pictures in our average exhibitions.

Our artists have not the same opportunities as the Japanese. The Japanese artist-artisans were, until lately, the inheritors of trade secrets, the *résumé*, so to say, of accumulated experience, extending over centuries; working with ample leisure for some patron who gave them a generous, permanent income, and furnished them with the best of material, so that they could make each of their productions a work of art.

The devotion of the Japanese artist of the old régime to his work, and his intense appreciation of all that is beautiful and of much that is grand, were alike unquestionable; and generally the circumstances of the country, throughout its history, greatly favoured the growth of these dispositions. Although the principle of division of labour, which is nowadays supposed to be the very foundation of Western civilization, was not unknown among them, the Western artist-artisan had always been disposed to carry his work himself through every one of its stages, whether his task were that of working in metal or lacquer, of preparing woven fabrics, or of pottery in any of its branches. Each workman thus looked on his work, while it was going on, as on a child that he loved. He was striving after beauty in every shape, and not after money; and he had his compensation in a way which would cause some surprise to the modern artist. The Japanese merchant had no status whatever, though he were as rich as Crœsus. Money alone bought no position, and a prince was willing to spend many hours with an artist-artisan, while the richest merchant would have been beneath his notice.

Each artisan had his studio and workshop in his home, and was assisted by wife, children, pupils, and apprentices; or he went off to spend weeks or months at the monasteries, temples, or feudal mansions, filling orders for patrons. The artist himself was often of rank, and working for an exclusive audience, people of much leisure and refinement, he was respected (and not merely tolerated as a curiosity, as it is the fashion in our polite society), and shared the luxurious living of the nobility.

And there was never any lack of patrons. Every feudal lord was a connoisseur and collector, and frequently also the patron of some temple which he endowed with works of art, specially ordered for the purpose.

In Japan the collector's craze is in the very air and soil. Even to-day every Japanese gentleman has his collection of some kind, and the scale ranges from the most superb accumulations of netsukés, inros, kakemonos, crystal balls, lacquer ware, armour, swords, porcelain, faience, bronzes, brocades, embroideries, costumes, pipes, temple accessories, coins, and autographs, down to shells, ferns, flowers, plants, rabbits, goldfish, Tosa chickens, and the latter-day postage-stamps.

No resident of Japan can escape this mania for any length of time; sooner or later he is sure to succumb to the curio fever. The high class Japanese artisan displays such an infinite variety and versatility in the manufacture of any article, that nobody can resist the temptation of becoming a specialist of one kind or another. All that is necessary to convince oneself of the truth of this statement is to study a collection of teapots, for instance, such as Mrs. Nellie Hopper Howard, the artist, and Mme. de Struve, wife of the Russian minister at Tokyo (1870–1882), have accumulated.

These collections contain hundreds and hundreds of tiny teapots, each differing in form, colour, and decoration. There are little teapots, shining with glaze and gilding, moulded into every possible shape — square, triangular, pentagonal, hexagonal, round, oval, high, low, wide, narrow, flat, and full bodied; squatty, perch-like, tapering, top-heavy; with long, short, wide, narrow, pointed, and curling spouts and handles; teapots in the shape of boxes, baskets, tubs, buckets, lanterns, temples, houses, boats, melons, pumpkins, gourds, apples, pears, frogs, turtles, cats, dogs, storks, ducks, cows, fish, flowers, boys and girls, men and women. No metal or material has escaped the Japanese workmen in fashioning teapots. From gold, silver, iron, bronze, brass, and every combination and alloy they know, from clay and biscuit, the roots of trees, joints of bamboo, from body of sea-shells, gourds, and even orange rinds, from lacquer, ivory, and straw, is evolved a hollow body, with a cover, spout, and handle. There are large bronze, brass, and inlaid iron kettles, such as simmer on every *hibachi* in the empire, masterpieces of graceful form and pleasing decoration, as well as tiny silver pots, that by strange combinations, even to inlaying with iron, have become miracles of patient and minute workmanship.

The manufacture of ceramic ware has always been one of the proudest possessions of Japan. The productions of Arita, Kyoto, Kaga, Satsuma, and Owari, rank with the best of European manufacturers. Of the art pottery and stoneware of Satsuma and Arita it may be said that nothing better in the material has ever been produced.

Japanese pottery impresses by the freedom of the colouring and the character of the design. It retains the forms of apparent rusticity, and in its ornamentation adheres to the academic conceptions of the Chinese masters. It is futile to compare it with the classic designs and symmetrical forms of Greek and Etruscan vases, as the art conception of the Japanese is totally different from that of the ancient Greek, who regarded symmetry and correct draughtsmanship of the human form as their principal accomplishments. All that the Japanese have in common with the Greek is their refinement and reserve power.

The principal charm of Japanese pottery lies in its colour. Take, for instance, the Wakai collection at the Paris Expotion of 1878. It was made according to classical traditions, and not to please European tastes. It consisted almost exclusively of jars with flat covers of ivory, and cups of all sizes with mouths more or less widened, and whose outlines were indented with fantastically arranged finger-marks. There was nothing in their shape to interest the Parisian collectors, but their colouring made a most vivid impression. It revealed the deepest black, the most brilliant white, with innumerable other tints, from cream colour to wonderful crimson. The colour lends a beauty and value often to the commonest piece of pottery.

One does not need to be an expert to experience the pleasure which the art of the potter is always able to give to the sensitive mind. The connoisseur is apt to forget the beauty of the object in his hand, in his ardour to determine its rightful data, maker, and place of production, and to identify it beyond doubt, either by figures, marks, or descriptions. I have never come in contact with Japanese connoisseurs, or spent days poring over the treasures in some musty *kura*. I have never sat down with the amiable Rokubei, the dignified Dohachi, the good-natured Yeiraku, and never had the opportunity of gathering words of wisdom from the lips of Kohitsu, Machida, Tanemura, Maida, Ninagawa, and other experts.

I would consider such experiences rather a hindrance to the proper passing of a correct judgment, for art appreciation is, after all, a matter of feeling.

In my opinion, — which may elicit a disdainful shrug of the shoulders from the experts, — Japanese pottery reached its highest perfection in those simple rugged forms, whose glaze, containing very much lead, is without lustre, and whose colour resembles charcoal, like the Showo-Shigariki wares of the latter part of the sixteenth century. Not dazzling at the first glance, they reveal a charm, at closer scrutiny, that is something more than elegance. Through their black complexion, covered with a dull lead glaze without light, one discerns a shimmer of refinement which is strong enough to despise all adjectives. These pieces of pottery seem to have a soul-life of their own, and by a curious association of thought they invariably conjure up before me a wild *samurai* in black lacquer armour. The careless originality and vigorous simplicity of their shapes laugh, in their superiority, proudly without conceit, at all the faultless curves and studied graces of the Ming Blue.

Chosuke, whose magic manipulation of clay and fire created this ware, allowed only two hundred pieces to go forth into the world "to tantalize the critical judgment of posterity."

The Japanese became potters by the peculiar nature of their environment. The islands, being mountainous, are rich in watercourses, which carry with them great quantities of sand, mixed with clay. Thus the nation has been furnished by nature with the numberless varieties of paste which are essential for good pottery.

The first authentic potter of Japan was a Buddhistic priest by the name of Giyoji.

At the start the Japanese potters were disciples of the Chinese; they learnt from them the various baking and enamelled coatings of countless vivid and delicate tints. A potter by the name of Toshiro, in the early part of the thirteenth century, made a special visit to China to perfect himself in his art, and on return to his native town, Soto in Owari, he introduced great improvements in the character of the ware made there. Owing to his exertions a great impetus was given to the art.

Shortly after, when household utensils of lacquer went out of use, the demand for pottery greatly increased, and new forms and processes were invented. In the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, the iridescent blacks, reds, browns, and bottle greens of the *Raku* ware, rather crude in form, were the favourite products of the potter's wheel.

To the ceramic pieces originally derived from China, the numberless isolated kilns, established in all the provinces, and particularly in the neighbourhood of Kyoto, added the beauty of their products, as, for instance, the Timba kiln, with its heavy brown and yellow glazes.

Then, suddenly, at the end of the sixteenth century, shortly after tea had become the national beverage and the elaborate tea ceremonies had come into vogue, there came a marvellous outburst of colour, the ceramic art underwent a complete revolution, and the results were pottery of remarkable ingenuity, taste, and skill, as the Awata, Kiyomidzu, and Omura ware of the colour of coffee and milk, covered with classic decoration in starchy blue, light green, and red coral.

Ninsei († 1660) was the founder of these three kilns. He was the originator of this style of pottery, and of all decorated pottery. Authentic specimens are very rare. Many a bit of "old Kyoto," as these wares are called, supposed to be at least three hundred years old, shows in the cracklin ground a mark made by some unscrupulous tradesman of to-day.

Like all great potters, Ninsei was very skilful with his brush. His decorations, as well as those of his contemporaries, were worthy of a painter. There were storks of pure white with a touch of vermilion on the head, chrysanthemums with petals overlapping each other, landscapes with half a dozen strokes of the brush, figures in elaborate court dresses, etc.

Two of his foremost disciples were Kenzan (1663–1743), a brother of Korin, and Yeiraku, who founded the kiln of Imado. Kenzan preferred massive forms and bold decorations. He tried to give his ceramic productions the appearance of archaic heaviness and awkwardness.

They are remarkably beautiful in their lustre and subdued colouring.

Yeiraku, who lived in the latter part of the eighteenth century, was a virtuoso in his profession. Gonse calls him "le plus étonnant pasticheur." He neglected form somewhat in favour of colour schemes. He was a perfect technician, and equally successful in metallic, speckled, iridescent, dull, vigorous, and delicate effects. He sometimes animated his surface with a crystalline shimmer that lent a peculiar ethereal charm to his work. His tea-sets were particularly in demand.

Other potters, whose work is highly esteemed by collectors, were Shioukai, who excelled in the modelling of little statuettes; Dohatchi and Mokubei and Rokubei, who devoted themselves to miniature bric-à-brac, mostly in the shape of animals.

The pottery of Ninsei and his followers is a truly native product. Their glazes, composition of colours, crackle, and lace-work is entirely original with them. It is invariably picturesque in effect, in contrast to the academic conceptions, and the severe formalism of Chinese ceramics.

Experts can recognize the origin of a piece of pottery most easily by its colour. They know that soft greenish grays are peculiar to the Sanda Seiji kiln, delicate grays and salmon shades to the Haji style; that Somaw are excels in speckled grays and browns, and Oki in lustrous yellow browns; that opaque inglazes are a characteristic of the Shigariki school, and that the Oriba potters have made a specialty of splashed effects.

The secrets of porcelain manufacture were introduced into Japan by Shonsoi in 1520. Arita, in the province of Hizen, was from the start, and is still to-day, the leading porcelain manufacturing town of Japan. The ware was called Imari, simply because Imari, at the head of the gulf of Omura, is the principal shipping port for Arita's products. Every other shop in the main street of Arita is devoted to the sale of pottery, while the noise of the clay-grinding and pulverizing machines continually haunts the ear, for on either side of the narrow town a watercourse supplies the power by which they are kept in action night and day.

The larger part of the pottery produced here is the underglazed blue and white combination which made Arita famous, and which was successfully imitated in the Delft ware. But the manufacture is by no means confined to that class; the Koransha factory, so well represented at the Chicago Fair, also produces jars, vases, and table sets in combinations of rich dark green, red, gold, and chocolate brown.

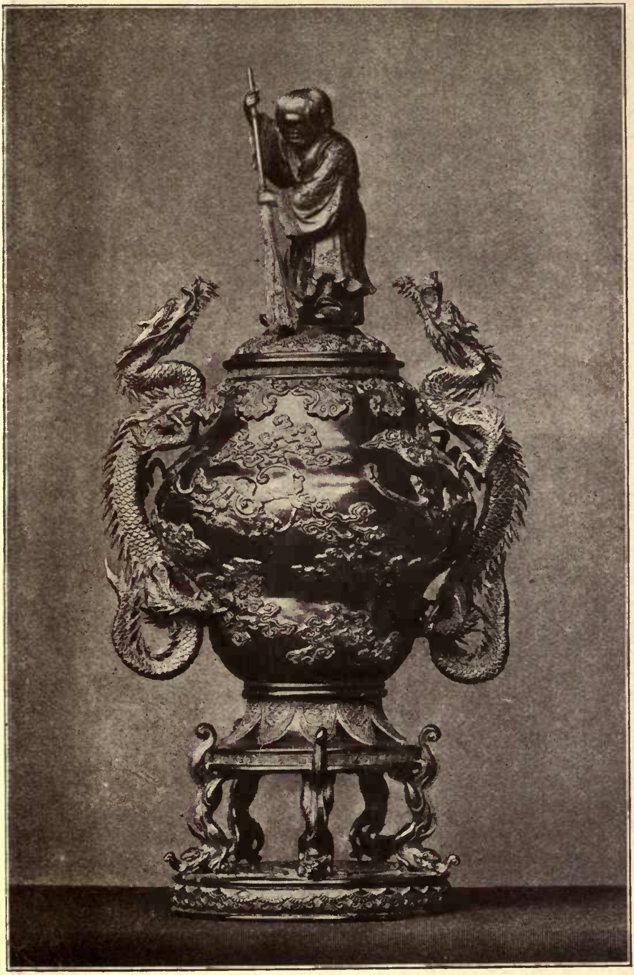
The Kaga porcelain is almost as famous as that of Arita. About 1650, Saitchiso, after serving a long apprenticeship with Shonsai, went to Koutani, and created those choice specimens known as Koutani ware, masked by enamels. His products are not numerous, but full of energy in their colouring of manganese, myrtle green, faded yellow, black, and white, and enriched in the more valuable specimens by coatings of gold and silver. The transparency of the glaze is exquisite. The ware is very rare, as Shonsai, as well as his successor, Morikaghe, a painter of the Kano school, could never be induced to work for the ordinary trade.

Most popular of all Japanese porcelains is the Satsuma ware. The general idea seems to be that its products were rather large in size, but the opposite is the case. The large vases which we see so often at auction sales were specially made for the European market. The ware is known for its soft, cream-coloured tones, which have almost the effect of old ivory, with delicate colour decoration broken with pale gold tints.

By far more original, however, is the Bizen ware, at its best in the nineteenth century, with its dull leaden blues, and the metallic sheen of brown, and the quaint intrinsically original Banko ware, worked out of sheets of thin clay, pressed, folded, cut, and patterned in white mosaic, or embellished with glazed figures in low relief, and resembling nothing so much as bits of soft gray or white crêpe stretched over a hidden frame.

Very little progress, artistically, has been made in the porcelain manufacture since 1800, — the manufacturers are apparently satisfied with copying the models handed down from the past, — while the purely mechanical parts of the process have been steadily improved. Banko, Kyoto, and Arita can still be bought to advantage by the not too fastidious collector. The Owari kilns in Nagoya, on the other hand, are devoted almost entirely to productions for the foreign market. Its wares are the least desirable and least Japanese of any in Japan, the articles poorly modelled and decorated in all the hideous pinks, blue, and yellows known to the aniline dye, and ablaze with cheap gilding.

Also in the manipulations of metals and amalgams like the *shakudo*, iron enamelled with gold, silver, and bronze, the Japanese are past masters. The endless versatility and brilliancy of idea which they display, for instance, in their sword-guards, is marvellous. They have a way of combining alloys with pure metals, and of producing effects by the inlaying and overlaying of metals — often introducing half a dozen different metals into a space not covering an inch, in order to



BRONZE VASE.

produce a picture of variegated colours — far beyond the reach and skill of Western artisans.

Braziers, incense-holders, water-tanks, flower vases, standing lanterns, memorial tablets, and tomb doors gave the bronze workers abundance of opportunity to show their skill in handling metal also in larger dimensions. The big bell of Kyoto, fourteen feet high by nine feet two inches in diameter, proves that they were thoroughly initiated into the secrets of bronze casting.

The casting of a memorial lantern, or column for some temple, was usually a public and outdoor affair, attended with festive hilarities. Furnaces, bellows, casting-pots, tools, and appliances were brought to or prepared at the spot, and the details of the process were watched by holiday crowds.

Their methods of bronze casting, and

their jealously guarded secrets of alloy, niello, and metallic work seem to be of Chinese, Persian, or Indian origin. At least, such is the opinion of experts. The forms and shapes of old temple ornaments and flower vases, in my opinion, point unmistakably to a Persian origin.

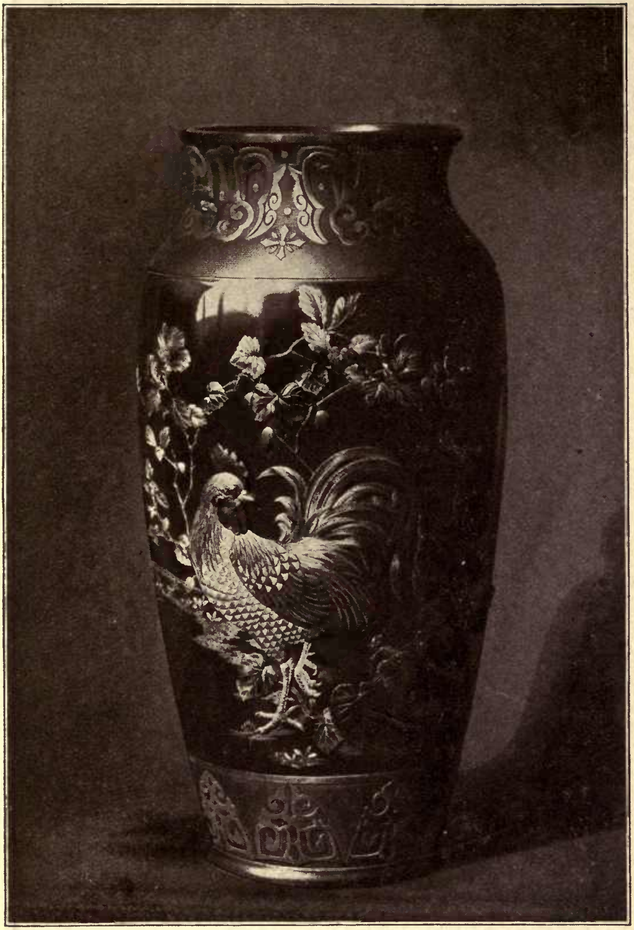
There is a peculiar grace and freedom in their work, despite its manifold minute and delicate details. Nobody can compete with them in representing, for instance, the undulating lines of a lotus leaf. The fidelity in the most minute markings of leaf and flower, even to the motion and colour of rain-drops on their cup-shaped surfaces, is amazing as it is inimitable. Their bronze birds, fishes, and insects seem to be instinct with life, so true are they to nature. In expressing the attitudes and motions of fish and fowl, and the sportive grace of domestic animals and little forest creatures, they have never been surpassed. Remarkable also is their knowledge of the value of reflected light in relation to metal composition. It endows their work with a rare pictorial quality.

In the fifteenth century, the Goto and Sojo families excelled in metal works. The seventeenth century was the classic age for metal work. The bronzes of this time have a certain severity of form, great vigour in the modelling, and a dull black colour. In the following century the forms became more graceful in line, and the colour effect was heightened by the inlaying and overlaying of metals. This age also produced the greatest workers in *cire perdu*.

The principal artists of this period were Seimin and Taoun, both incomparable in the mastery of their material, Tiyo, Keisai, Jiogioko, Somin, Seifu, Tokusai, and Nakoshi. The signature of any of these men on a piece of work guarantees its artistic value.

Although modern work does not come up to the standard of the old, it is at times very beautiful. The bronzes, set with jewels, which created such a sensation at the Centennial Exposition at Philadelphia, show that the metal workers still possess some originality.

These jewel-incrusted bronzes have a story. On the hilt, handle, and scabbard of the samurai's swords from two to twenty ornaments were embedded, wrought in metal, with the highest art of the metallurgist. After the issue of an imperial edict in 1868, the use of swords was suddenly abolished, and the samurais, impoverished as they were, were practical enough to dispose of their feudal weapons. The market, consequently, was glutted with an amazing stock of sword jewels. By a happy thought these gems of art



Bronze Vase.

were applied to bronzes, and the results were those quaint vases and jars, which look like the "Holy Grails" of some Eastern legend.

The noblest of Japanese crafts, purely native in origin and development, is that of lacquering. In the same way as China has given its name to all porcelain, Japan has given its name to all lacquer ware, first introduced to the knowledge and admiration of Europe in the seventeenth century. The beauty and excellence of Japanese lacquer, its mirror-like and rain-proof surface, has never been matched, not even in China.

what is lacqued?

The materials for writing, household furnishings, and personal adornment, cups and saucers, trays and *sake* bottles, medicine boxes and dishes, with articles of civic ceremony and warlike helmets, shields, and armour, furnished the principal fields for the display of its finest

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artistic achievements, though large surfaces, such as doors, staircases, ceilings, frames and panels, vehicles, and even ships, were lacquered.

queing
process

The Japanese lacquer varnish is gathered from the urushi-tree, which, it is said, supplies a finer gum than that of any other species. It is subjected to various manipulations and refining processes before it can safely be mixed with colouring matter. From the first gathering to the last application, increasing care as to the dryness or moisture of the atmosphere, the exclusion of every particle of dust, and other conditions, are essential. The workmen are "in possession of secret processes," and we must be satisfied with knowing that layer after layer — up to fifty coats — of the lacquer varnish are laid on the basic material at intervals of days or weeks, and that after it has thoroughly dried — and, by a strange paradox, it must dry in dampness, well moistened, or even saturated with water, else it will run or stick — the same smoothing process with lumps of charcoal and the fingers, after all the most perfect polishing instruments, is repeated.

The articles to be lacquered are generally made of fine-grained pine wood, very carefully seasoned and smoothed, so that not the slightest inequality of surface or roughness of edge remains. But also silk, ivory, and tortoise-shell are used. In the finer and older specimens, bringing their weight in gold, the varnish is so hard and immune that neither boiling water nor boiling oil will affect its surface.

The art of lacquering dates historically from the seventh century, though tradition assigns its birth to the ages when almanacs, clocks, and writings had not yet arrived from the Asian mainland. Not a few articles, now in national or private museums, are, by documentary evidence, over a thousand years old.

Quote

"In old feudal days," Griffis relates, "when nearly every daimyo had his court lacquerer, a set of household furniture and toilet utensils was part of the dowry of a noble lady. On the birth of a daughter, it was common for the lacquer artist to begin the making of a mirror-case, a washing-bowl, a cabinet, a clothes-rack, or a chest of drawers, often occupying from one to five whole years on a single article. An *inro*, or pill-box, might require several years for perfection, though small enough to go into a fob. By the time the young lady was marriageable, her outfit of lacquer was superb."

The first information of the existence of lacquer ware dates from the ninth century. In a book published by the philosopher, Shihei, red and golden lacquer are incidentally mentioned. At the beginning of the tenth century, the Nashidji lacquer, of a yellowish orange colour, sprinkled with gold, was invented.

The oldest lacquerer, of whom authentic specimens can still be procured, was Hoyami Koyetsu (1556–1637). His black generally assumed an agreeable soft brown tint, owing to a substratum of red coloured lacquer. A few years later, Soyetsou, Koma Kiuhaka, and Korin became prominent. With them, lacquer of the hue of maple sugar came into fashion. Their designs were chiefly distinguishable for bravura of execution. Korin's pieces were almost repellent by their vigour. He was the first to introduce pewter, lead, and tin in lacquer work. His gold of a rich red hue, pleasant and soft in tone, — an apposition to the customary brownish and yellowish gold, — has often been imitated, but never excelled.

The favourite subjects of crane and streams, rock and sea waves, raindrops and petrels, cloud and dragon, Chinese poetry, idealized landscapes, or the repertoire of graphic designs, were repeated over and over again. The artist knew them by heart; they were his stock in trade, and the public, familiar with these standards and symbols for many generations, understood and appreciated them. Also pet patterns, in the form of borders or diapers in combination with floral and other designs, were used with excellent effect.

Of the twenty-eight most famous lacquer artists of Japan, the majority flourished in Yedo, where the beauty and delicacy of execution reached its highest perfection.

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Lacquer-Work

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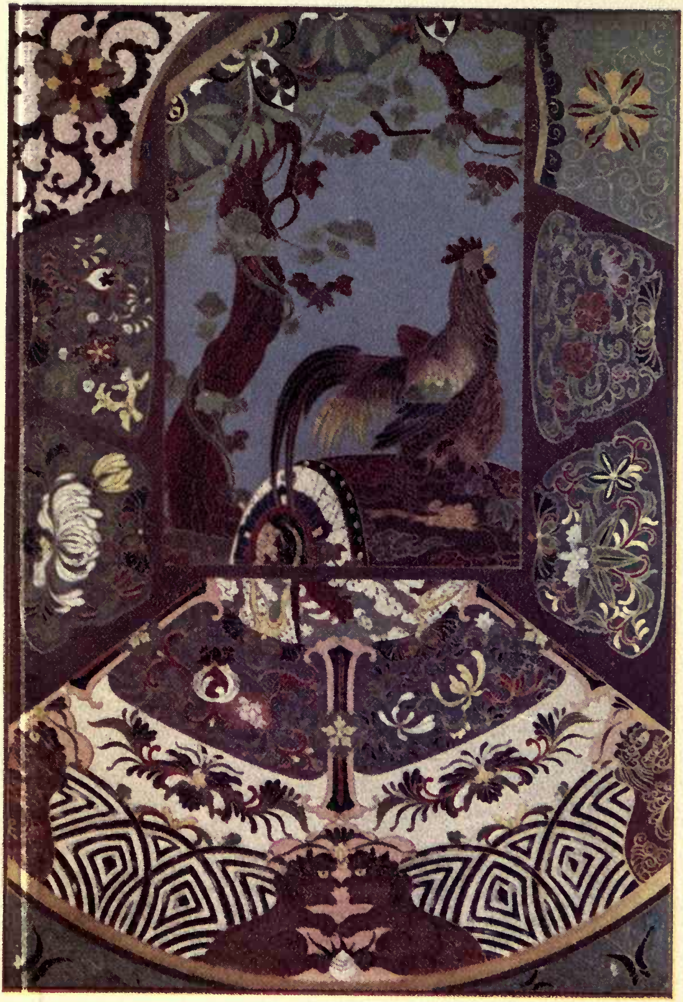


the most skilful lacquerer the world has ever known. His style is considered classic. Nobody excelled him in the delicate management and decoration of the lac, in the science of composition, and the profound knowledge of the craft. His gold, like that of the great Korin, full of novel and rare effects, capable of running through a whole gamut of sober yet brilliant tones of red, yellow, and green, would deserve a special study.

His miniature cabinets, jewel and writing boxes belong to the most beautiful pieces of decoration which can be seen. But they have grown very scarce, even in Japan itself, and rarely turn up in any sale. He was a great manipulator of materials; lac alone did not satisfy him: he inserted ivory and agates into his compositions, tortoise-shell, coral, and mother-of-pearl, and pieces of ancient pottery, as well as gold and silver in rich profusion.

He incrusted, he modelled, he damascened, he soldered and riveted with marvellous precision. His treatment was always sculpturesque, his outlines were bold and rugged, and his modelling superb.

He had many followers, notably Hanzan, Zeshin, and Kenya. Hanzan came next to his master as a lacist in certain effects of great brilliancy, and even excelled him in combinations of lac and pearl. He was particularly fond of representing fish and shells in their natural colours upon a rich background of rich avanturine gold. Zeshin, who had a wild and unrestrained fancy, imitated in lacquer every other kind of material. Some of his pieces of lac look like pottery and wood carvings, others reproduce all the lustre and golden browns and yellows of an ancient bronze, discoloured by age. Kenya had less vigour, invention, and originality than the other two, but was almost their equal in the combination of materials and in richness of pictorial effect.

The last faithful adherent of the old school of lacquering was Watanobe Tosu, a contemporary of Zeshin, who still lived in Tokyo in the seventies of the last century, working for years at a tobacco-box ten by eight and six inches in dimensions, by order of the empress.

The old artisans, who made beautiful and ingenious things to please the fancy of a daimyo, and to be presented as gifts to a neighbouring daimyo, put good and earnest work into everything they made; but now that the average workmen have abandoned their old unmercenary standard and cater to foreign taste, continually reproducing the same stock of ideas and set of symbols, their productions have become exceedingly bad in taste to the connoisseur.

And yet, being after all a good deal superior to any of our factory bric-à-brac, their productions are still able to give us a faint idea of the remarkable imperishable qualities of the art of old Japan.

CHAPTER VIII.

MODERN JAPANESE ART

THE political changes which had taken place in Japan — the opening of the islands to foreign commerce in 1859, the inevitable struggle between the decrepit Shogunate and its recalcitrant vassals, the complete downfall of the former in 1867, and the establishment of a new political organization, presided over by the Mikado, affecting the expressions of its national life to the very core, did not leave the arts untouched.

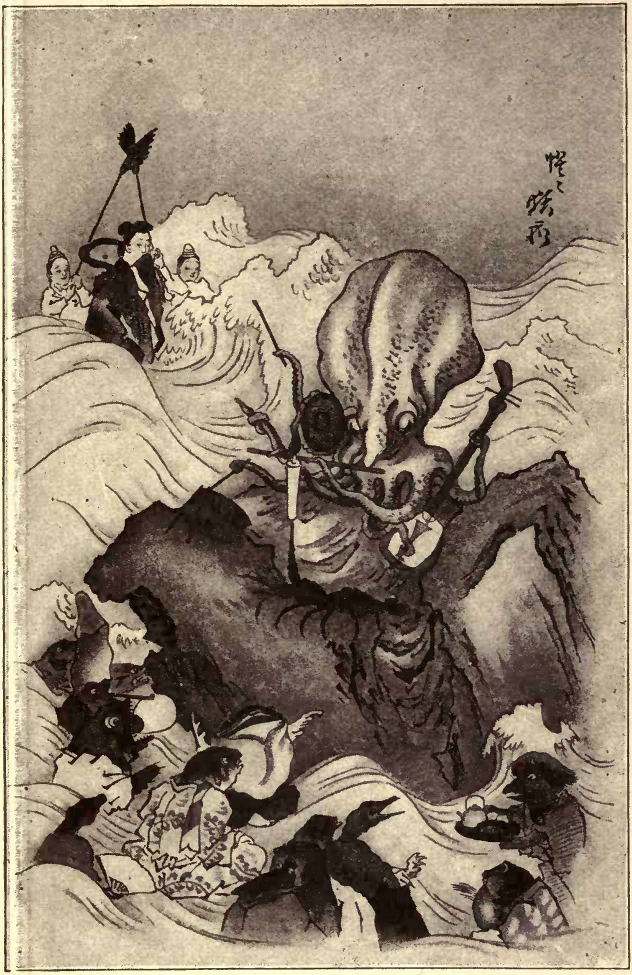
For a decade or so, when the nation was seized with a sudden passion for Western ideas, art was sadly neglected, almost forgotten. The reorganization of the constitution, the reform of the laws, the formation of an army and navy, the construction of highways, railroads, lighthouses, telegraph lines, and the establishment of a national system of education, had first to be attended to. The artists, deprived of native patronage, starved or found employment in cheap production for the foreign market, and the profession involuntarily turned to Europe for guidance. The visible superiority of the Occident in all other matters eventually led to a study of the methods and principles of Western art. A number of young men made their way to European and American studios, and trained themselves to charcoal studies from Greek casts, and oil studies from nature and still life, in the same manner as our art students do. It was even found necessary to import Italian painters and sculptors, and to establish art academies, which hitherto had been unknown.

The results of this influence were twofold. It has created, firstly, a new school, based entirely on the art of the West, in which European methods and materials have been adopted to the complete exclusion of the Japanese. Secondly, it has penetrated into the recesses of Japanese art itself, causing yet another new school to arise, which, while it works in the old lines, and with the old materials, admits the virtues of Western ideas, and endeavours to assimilate them so far as it is able. Thus, the art world of Japan is split into three sections, perfectly distinct in their views, and well defined in the results of the work in which these views are carried out. They may fittingly be termed the Conservatives, the Moderate Conservatives, and the Radicals.

The Conservatives naturally represent

the old traditional school. Although there is among them no master alive whose name could be put on the roll of the great artists "who have been," there are many who, whilst they lack inventive power, still possess executive skill of a high order, and are able to preserve, technically, at least, the traditions of their predecessors.

Kikuchi Yosai, and later his pupil, Matsumato Fuko, tried to keep up the old traditions by painting historical pictures, and Isen and Shosen, lacking inventive spirit of their own, were busy with copying ancient masterpieces, Imao Keinen, noted for his graphic delineation of birds and flowers, and Giokusen worked successfully in the Okyo style. The latter artist produced a most remarkable kakemono in his "Ghost," floating up out of space, the head, black shock of hair, and shoulders most minutely painted on the



KIOSAI. — COUNCIL IN THE DRAGON CASTLE.

border, while the rest of the body fades away into the silken canvas. Also Hokusai's two talented pupils, Hokkei and Kawanobe Kiosai (1831–1889), were still living. Both were gifted workmen, who followed their master exactly as regards subjects and manner, but they fail in that mysterious creative power which made the works of Hokusai seem alive.

Kikuchi Yosai (1787–1878) really needs a chapter by himself. He is in his way as remarkable an artist as Hiroshige or Hokusai. He was already famous as an historian and literary man when he took up painting, and he made use of all his learning in the new profession. He became the delineator of historical personages. His "Kanoaka painting" is a good example of his work. Like Alma Tadema, he made the most scrupulous archæological studies, and it is the more astonishing that his compositions are simplicity itself.

He even disdained the use of colour. He is satisfied with frankly telling what he knows, yet in a masterly way as far as drawing is concerned. In pure line few have been his superior. He is the elegant *causeur* of historical anecdotes, and his kakemonos appeal to one's intellect even more strongly than to one's eyes.

The work of the Radicals is entirely Western. They found the classical styles unequal to the expression of the new ideas, and largely unintelligible to a modern public, and frankly adopted the European style of painting. In their choice of themes, in the mediums employed, and in the treatment, they hardly differ from European artists. In order to realize how remarkable this really is, one has to consider how complete is the transformation of conditions under which it is produced. It is not merely the transition from watercolour to oil, the substitution of canvas for absorbent paper, but the whole method, the composition, the principles and the ideas have also been transformed; the ancestral ways have been entirely abandoned. Their pictures denote enthusiasm and eager study, but at the same time a painful lack of individuality. It is exceedingly doubtful if it were possible for older and individual artists to change from the old to the new.

The Radical school, called Meiji Bijutsou Kwai (founded 1889), is composed exclusively of young men and women, many of them being merely amateurs. Being really nothing but students, they invariably had attached themselves to the methods of some Western artist, caught his style, and formed themselves on him. Their first exhibition of pictures, at Tokyo, in 1890, was not very numerous, but it reflected almost in every instance the manner, the subject, the composition, and the execution of some Parisian, Munich, or New York artist. Particularly noteworthy was their astounding power of copying. The still-life studies were really the masterpieces of the exhibition. Also in arrangement and colour combination their work has a peculiar charm, a national flavour of its own.

Seiki Kouroda, a pupil of Raphael Collins, of Paris, is the leading exponent of this school. He returned to Japan in 1894, and was made professor of the Western style of painting at the Tokyo Academy of Fine Arts in 1896. Dissatisfied with the amateurish work of the Meiji Bijutsou Kwai, he created a new secessionist society, which used the head of a horse on a palette as coat of arms, and called itself Shiro-uma, or White Horse Society. In October, 1896, the Japanese Secession held its first exhibition. It was a bold attempt to revolutionize art. But neither the story-telling pictures of Kouroda, nor the impressionistic figure studies of Eisaku Wada had any striking merit in themselves. They attracted, however, a large measure of public attention, and gave rise to a lively controversy between the adherents of the old and new styles.

The sculptors of the new movement are even less original than the painters. The monuments recently put up in Japan are fully as bad as some of the bronze statuary which disgraces our public squares. Only the equestrian statue of General Kusunoke Masashige, by the sculptor Takamura Korin, is worthy of some consideration.

The Radicals never convince us when they attempt elaborate compositions. Kouroda's most important picture, "An Old Story," depicting a number of geishas and young men in a temple garden, listening to the flute-playing of an old priest, is not even as interesting as Alma Tadema, while his views of Fusiyama and river scenes, bearing all the characteristics of Japanese composition, are exquisite creations. They are vibrant with light and warmth, and show keen observation of nature in the Western sense.

The Radical school seems to have no future. It will never become national. Its exponents have nothing to say to their countrymen, at least, nothing of lasting value. They will always be considered aliens, no matter whether they have their studios in Tokyo or New York. Genjiro Yeto, a very talented artist, who has made New York his home, and who has deliberately abandoned all the ideals of his countrymen in regard to art, proves this statement to be a true one. It is impossible to classify him as a Japanese artist, as he has nothing in common with his country, and I fear that he will never be regarded as an American artist, as he has remained thoroughly Oriental in everything else but his art.

The process of absorbing new ideas, which has mainly occupied the Japanese nation during the last thirty years, would, however, have been incomplete without this innovation. It undoubtedly did good; it enabled the Japanese to get in touch with Western art ideas. But, of the numbers who have taken it up, how many will remain faithful? Even now one might assert that it was only a means to an end. Innovations of this kind do an immense amount of good; they rouse people out of sleep; they make them earnest, enthusiastic, and thoughtful, and no doubt the Radicals were right in preaching a "new art." Yet, every true lover of art will rejoice to hear, that to this very day, all attempts to assimilate their art to ours have been unsuccessful, as the world cannot afford to lose an art which is so unique, so perfect in its own line, and which no other country can successfully emulate.

Meanwhile a lucrative trade had sprung up in the exportation of antiques and modern decorated wares. Japanese art had become a craze in the West, and the Japanese government, which had done so much to meet the general demand for information as to the learning, customs, laws, and institutions of foreign countries, found it, at last, advisable to do something for the encouragement of its native art. It realized that the flower of its civilization had been sadly neglected. Nearly all the artists of the old tradition had died without leaving heirs, and the plundered stock of antique art treasures was well-nigh exhausted. At the close of the year 1888 the Department of Education opened the first native Academy of Fine Arts at Tokyo. It selected Kakuzo Okakura as director, and the selection proved to be a very adequate one. Although no artist himself, he is a man of considerable art knowledge, who can see the good both in Eastern and Western art, and the wise touch of his advice is everywhere felt.

He gathered around himself as instructors the few "progressive" masters who still survived in the arts of painting, sculpture, metal chasing, bronze casting, lacquering, etc., enabling the younger generation to learn the respective traditions before they had completely died out. The lacquerer Zeshin was still living, and induced to join the new movement. The government, under imperial patronage, entrusted commissions for public works to the professors of the academy, and granted to students and artists pecuniary prizes with honorary titles. It also founded a new national museum for the preservation and study of important relics in Tokyo, and granted special privileges to art students desirous of becoming intimately acquainted with the collections of the old Kyoto and Nara museums. The latter two are under the direction of Yamataka, an expert of the old style, who has made a specialty of arranging annual loan exhibitions of the art treasures contained in monasteries and temples throughout the islands.

Our hopes in a renaissance of Japanese art must inevitably be fixed on the Moderate Conservatives. Working on the old lines, and with the old materials, they endeavour, by yielding to the influences of Western methods, to enlarge their own limitations. What they are capable of, they have shown at the Chicago World's Fair. While at all previous expositions at Vienna, at Paris, and at Philadelphia, Japan's art triumphs were largely due to her loan collections of antiques or modern replica, at Chicago, for the first time, modern Japanese art has deliberately dared to be original, and to ask the world's favour for her contemporary art on its own merits.

The fact that Western art demands a fuller treatment of subordinate parts, however, involved the Japanese artist in many unexpected difficulties, which in many instances he did not succeed in mastering. Let me exemplify this by one of the Exhibition pictures. My readers who have visited the Chicago Fair may still recall it.

Two wild geese, drawn to perfection, one of them coming out of the picture straight at you, are flying over a sea, heaving with impossible waves. The incident of the flying geese no artist but a Japanese could have portrayed so deftly, nor with such perfect realization of flight; but Japanese art would be satisfied with the incident. A wash or two of pale colour to suggest the waves, again in a way that no other art but Japanese could suggest, and the picture would be finished. The new pictorial principles, however, depend on the artist's skill in painting it, and not on the vivid imagination of the beholder, on which the Japanese artist depends so much. And the only waves which the Japanese artist knows, other than suggestive waves, are in hard outlines, and he is not accustomed to deal with great masses of them. And so it has come about that the sea, over which the geese are flying, is composed of a repetition of harshly outlined waves, which have no tonal connection with the birds.

Hashimato Gaho, chief professor of the Tokyo Academy of Fine Arts, and undoubtedly Japan's greatest living artist, achieved a remarkable success with a large landscape in the Exhibition. He has conceived and achieved a perfect scheme of light through the whole of his picture, a thing unknown in the old art. It was a landscape of rocks and maple-trees, with a waterfall. The whole of it was full of the light of day, which glittered in the sky with its traditional wash of gold, which in turn scintillated through the glow of the crimson maple leaves, illuminated the cloud of spray from the waterfall, and sparkled in the river as it passed out of sight. Yet even Gaho could not tear himself away from rocks treated in the old traditional manner; they were crudely outlined, and the surfaces simply washed in, so that the irreverent simile of cut-out pieces of cardboard was about justified.

Other works of special remark, with which the small, but choice Chicago display made us acquainted, were a summer landscape by Kumagaye Naokiko; a very originally composed "Procession," by Ogato Gekko; a group of fowl against a background of snow, by Watanabe Seitei; and the head of a tigress, a marvel of Japanese realism and technical accomplishments, by Kishi Chikudo, the grandson of Ganku, a celebrated animal painter. In sculpture, the ape watching an eagle, by Takamaru Kowun, the leading professor of wood-carving; the statuette of the Buddhist divinity Kwannon, the largest ivory carving ever made, by the famous Ichikawa Komei; and the splendid bronze relief of the goddess Benten, remarkable for the richness and elegance of lines, by the great caster of the new art school, Okasaki Sessei, carried off the honours.

Professor Ernest F. Fenellosa considers this relief the most notable contribution to Japanese sculpture of recent years. He praises it in the following words:

"Taking the simpler bronze reliefs of the Nara school of the seventh century as his starting-point, he has invested them with a wealth of line structure suggested by the Tosa religious painters of the thirteenth, fusing both elements into a splendid original impression of the 'Goddess of Music,' so perfectly in accord with the laws of low relief in bronze as to make this work the Japanese analogue of the purest period of the corresponding fifteenth-century Italian art."

Among the lacquer work, a book-shelf executed by Shirayama Fukumatsu attracted a good deal of attention. It was said to be the finest product of the last forty years, and worthy of the adulations bestowed upon it. Even a Korin or Ritsuo might have been proud of its authorship.

It can nevertheless not be denied that Japanese art has entered a rather unproductive period. It is outside of our time that the monuments of true artistic grandeur have to be sought.

All the constraint of rules and traditions have been required to make the Japanese mind produce the artistic beauty of which it was capable. Now these rules and traditions have considerably lost their value. The Japanese have found in Europe a new China, and, as formerly they imitated the art of the Celestial Kingdom, they now dream of adapting Western art.

But it is the introduction of the ever-prevailing and all-pervading spirit of commercialism which has done the most harm to Japanese art. When the whole population is given up to trade, it is difficult for the small voice of the art worker to be heard above the roar of the wheels of Mammon's car, as it heavily grinds along. Art patronage has ceased, and the artists and artisans find it impossible to resist the tempting offers of unscrupulous dealers who are content with the reproduction of traditional and conventional ideas, with as little invention, or even ingenuity in the matter of conception and workmanship, as might well be. And what is of special concern in this matter is the fact that the true artist, unwilling to make any concessions, finds it impossible to compete with factory work. Surely the artist, like every other workman, is entitled to adequate remuneration for his labour. Under the present condition of things, the artist, forced to work as quickly and cheaply as possible, cannot bring his individuality into play. He is obliged to compromise and transform his studio into an ordinary workshop.

John LaFarge has sized up the situation in a rather vague, but sincere and sympathetic manner. He said in one of his "Letters from Japan:"

"A sadness comes upon us when we go to see some of the modern workers. From them we depart with no more hope. It is like some puzzle, like having listened to an argument which you know is based on some inaccuracy that you cannot at the moment detect. This about the better, the new perfect work, if I can call it perfect, means only high finish and equal care. But the individual pieces are less and less individual; there is no more *surprise*. The means or methods are being carried further and *beyond*, so that one asks one's self, 'Then why these methods at all?' The *style* of this finer modern work is poorer, no longer connected with the greater design, as if ambition was going into method and value of material. Just how far this is owing to us I cannot tell, but the market is largely European, and what is done has a vague appearance of looking less and less out of place among our works, and has, as I said before, less and less suggestion of individuality. None of it would ever give it the slight shock of an exception, none of it would have the appearance which we know of our own best work, the *feeling* that we are not going to see more of it. This statement applies to the best work; the more common work is merely a degradation, the using of some part of the methods; just enough to sell it, and to meet some easily defined immediate commercial needs. I saw the beginnings years ago, and I can remember one of our great New York dealers marking on his samples the colours that pleased most of his buyers, who themselves again were to place the goods in Oshkosh or Third Avenue. All other colours or patterns were tabooed in his instructions to the makers in Japan. This was the rude mechanism of the change, the coming down to the worst public taste, which must be that of the greatest number at any given time; for commerce in such matters is of the moment: the sale of the wooden nutmeg, good enough until used."

Thus theoretically as well as practically, it will be best for Japan to hold fast to her own ideals of Asiatic tradition. It is a service which she owes to humanity. She is the last custodian of ancient Oriental culture. She alone has the advantage of seeing through the materialistic shams with which Western civilizations delude themselves, and of appropriating only such material as may help to rekindle her native flame.

The fusion of Eastern and Western ideas, which was accomplished two thousand years ago by Alexander the Great, who carried the borders of Greece to India, would become for a second time possible, and create in both hemispheres a far more rounded civilization than either has ever known.

Through her temperament, her individuality, her deeper insight into the secrets of the East, her ready designing of the powers of the West, and more than all through the fact that she enjoys the privilege of being a pioneer, it may have been decreed in the secret council chambers of destiny that on her shores shall be first created the new art which shall prevail throughout the world for the next thousand years.

THE END.

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